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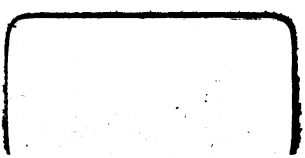

NACA

Werner's Readings and Recitations No. 36

Sixteen 2-Character Plays, Also Encores

Text and Stage-Business Edited and Revised by

PAULINE PHELPS AND MARION SHORT

NEW YORK

EDGAR S. WERNER & COMPANY

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A BOX OF POWDERS.

Text and Stage-Business Edited and Revised
By PAULINE PHELPS and MARION SHORT.

Copyright, 1906, by Edgar S. Werner.

CHARACTERS: MRS. NELLY WEMYSS, a young widow.
COLONEL JACK HUMPHREYS, a family friend.
VOICE, in the hall.

SCENE: Handsomely furnished drawing-room. Door C. in flat. Door at R., window at L., with long curtains reaching to floor. Couch at L. with covers reaching to floor. Piano at R. Near door R. a screen. Table near couch on which are embroidery skeins. Chairs, tables, bric-a-brac and other furnishings ad lib.

[DISCOVERED: NELLY, *entering door C. She speaks off as she enters.*]

NELLY. You understand, Mathilde? I am at home to no one but the Colonel.

VOICE. Yes, madame.

NEL. What a frightful city this is for an unprotected woman, young, rich, and a widow, to find herself alone in! Take a protector, get married, says the Colonel. Excellent advice, Colonel, but my experience with the late Mr. Wemyss warns me not to adopt it. But I must do something, as my suitors are becoming more and more persistent and audacious. Think of the temerity of my last and most ingenious admirer, whom I met last week at the Charity Ball. I was foolish enough to tell him that my husband was living, but old and infirm. On the strength of that valuable information, he has

had the effrontery to rent an apartment directly opposite my windows, and sits there all day watching my room. [*Goes to window.*] There he is now. And now for my feeble husband. [*Buttons dressing-gown around chair, places nightcap on top of feather-duster and puts it in collar of gown, and moves chair to window.*] Now stare at him as long as you please. [*Door-bell rings.*] Someone at the door! Who can it be? [*Opens door.*]

VOICE. A letter has just been handed in for Madame.

NEL. Let me have it. [*Closes door, opens letter and reads:*]

"MADAM:—Your eyes are very beautiful, but they are not as powerful as the lenses of my telescope, or they would have pierced to the heart and there read my love for you. But my lenses have enabled me to detect the fraud you have set up in your window. If you do not open the door to me, I shall enter through the window or down the chimney.

"C. H. ALLISTON,
"Ex-Amateur Champion Gymnast."

The villain! I will have to apply to the police for protection. [*Bell rings again.*] Ah! there is the Colonel; I shall inform him of that wretch's threat. No, he will only profit by the occasion to offer me the services of his sword and the hand at the hilt. But here he comes, and I am forgetting my husband. [*Carries chair into next room.*]

COLONEL HUMPHREYS [*outside*]. Good morning, Mathilde. Is your mistress in the drawing room? [*Enters, with package under arm.*] Mrs. Wemyss, I have the honor—she is not here. Well, I am not sorry, as I shall have time to take a little peep in the mirror. [*Looks at himself in glass.*] Now, I don't think that my face is too red this morning. Last night, she remarked: "Colonel, you must know that I admire you very much; you are a handsome man; but why *will* you always have such a high color?" "A trifle," I replied;—"want of exercise and all that; I will pick up in my riding, and you will see the result." This morning I took a six-mile gallop, and when I returned I looked

like—a boiled lobster. Something had to be done, and for the first time in my life I consulted a doctor. "Try a leech," said he. "No use, I have used a whole pound of them." "Then use a foot-bath." "But I can not go about in society lugging a foot-bath and a kettle of hot water." "Then, as a final recourse, I will prescribe another remedy. Here is a box containing twelve powders. Take two, wet them and place one on each ankle. It is sure relief." I have one on each ankle, and it is about time for them to assert themselves.

NEL. [*entering room*]. Good morning, Colonel. [*Motions him to seat.*]

COL. [*bowing*]. You are well this morning? Charmed to hear it. You must excuse my appearance; I came on horseback.

NEL. No apologies, Colonel. But, do you know that your face is ruddier than usual this morning? And what news have you come to tell me? I have been so occupied that I have not had time even to glance at my papers. [*Selects embroidery material from table.*]

COL. The Secretary of War has issued an order radically changing the style of boots worn by the army.

NEL. [*taking embroidery*]. Indeed?

COL. In place of shoes they must now wear boots. [*Opens package and takes out pair of military boots.*] Look at those boots. During the war we considered ourselves fortunate to have even shoes, and now they must have boots. A pack of idiots! [*Places boots on chair near piano.*]

NEL. I would sympathize with you, but my skein is in a frightful tangle, and I must beg a favor of you.

COL. Only too happy. [*Aside.*] Those powders tickle! [*Taps floor with right foot.*] What shall it be?

NEL. Come, sit here—on that chair. [*He taps floor with left foot.*] Take this basket of zephyr and sort it into colors. [*She sits on end of couch, he on chair facing her.*]

COL. I will put the reds on my right knee and the blues on my left. [*Taps floor with both feet.*]

NEL. Place them where you please, only sort them correctly.

COL. Ah! If it was as easy to disentangle [*moves nervously*] political complications. [*Aside.*] Great Caesar! how those powders itch! [*Aloud.*] Let us see—the reds here. [*Aside.*] It is growing worse. [*Aloud.*] And the blues—and —[*aside*]—there goes the other foot. [*With a sudden jerk he breaks several pieces of zephyr.*]

NEL. There, you are breaking them! Why, Colonel!

COL. Pardon me, I will learn with a little practice. [*Aside.*] Holy canons! how they sting! [*Breaks a whole skein of reds.*]

NEL. Now I *must* stop you, or you will destroy my entire stock of zephyr. To convince me that you are penitent, kneel on this ottoman at my feet, hold up your hands, and I will wind this skein on them.

COL. [*hesitatingly*]. Must I kneel?

NEL. Of course you must. Oh, these men! Eight days ago if I had permitted what I now command, you would have been kneeling there ever since.

COL. I submit to the inevitable and here I am. [*Kneels. Aside.*] Those powders are growing hotter every moment.

NEL. [*winding the skein*]. But what is the matter, Colonel?—you are restless. Are you ill?

COL. While I am at your feet? Never! [*Aside.*] That infernal doctor! [*Aloud.*] The position is a trifle unusual, Mrs. Wemyss, that is all.

NEL. But your feet, Colonel. Why, you're beating a perfect tattoo with them.

COL. [*trying to appear unconcerned*]. Am I, indeed? Well, I hope you won't mind. [*Alternately strikes toes of boots on floor while he kneels.*] I usually exercise at this time of day, trot at double quick, you know; and my feet sort of get in the habit [*wiggles and taps feet violently*]. Almost impossible to stop them—unless I keep my mind on them [*by strained effort manages to keep feet still for a second*]—and a man can't keep his mind on his feet, you know, when—[*moves feet up and down*

violently again]. My Lord, I believe they're made of mustard! [*hastily attempts explanation to* NELLY]—mustard color, I mean. This skein [*holds up skein, then sees that it is red*], no, red—red, ha, ha! to match the color of my face. Thank you for the compliment, dear lady. [*Suddenly drops skein in her lap, sits on stool, takes booted right foot in hand and rubs and wriggles boot.*] Excuse me, but I think there's a pebble in my boot. [*Same business with other foot.*] Beg pardon, I meant this foot, the other foot [*sticks both legs out straight, rubbing feet together*]—both feet in fact. [NELLY *stares at him in amazement and apprehension and moves a little. He approaches her and takes skein over his hands, again moving from one foot to the other with great restlessness all the time.*] Wouldn't you like to waltz with me a little, while I hold the skein? Such a graceful dance, the waltz, don't you think? You can wind while we're circling about—sort of unusual idea and all that, don't you think?

NEL. [*indignantly*]. No, I don't. Give me that skein. [*She takes it from his hands and goes back to seat while he hums a tune and waltzes crazily about, every once in awhile rubbing one foot against the other.*]

NEL. [*offended*]. I see you'd rather enjoy yourself in that frivolous fashion than to render me a little assistance when I ask it.

COL. [*coming to a stop, but still continuing to spring up and down on toes, aside*]. I've ruined myself forever with her. She thinks me indifferent to her charms. My heart is broken, but I can't stop to think of my heart now. My feet won't let me. The one thing to do is to get away. [*Aloud.*] Six o'clock, Mrs. Wemyss! How rapidly time passes while enjoying your society! I regret that I must go, but a prior engagement tears me away. [*Takes his hat.*]

NEL. [*aside*]. Going—and the ex-gymnast may come at any moment! [*Aloud.*] No, Colonel, you must dine with me. I accept no refusal.

COL. [*pacing up and down the room*]. I shall be too happy to accept, and only crave sufficient time to go to my club and return.

NEL. No! no! [*Seizes his arm.*] You must not leave me for a second. Try a game of dominoes. [*He breaks away from her.*]

COL. [*aside*]. I must keep moving or I will explode. [*Aloud.*] Pray excuse me this evening, Mrs. Wemyss—I should only bore you. [*Aside.*] If I could only change these riding boots for those loose military boots.

NEL. Then open the piano, and I will play that reverie you are so fond of.

COL. A charming idea, which I was just on the point of proposing myself. [*Aside.*] I may get a chance to change my boots behind the piano [*opens piano*].

[NELLY *goes to piano and plays. The* COLONEL *stations himself behind piano.*]

NEL. But you must not stand there. You're too close to the piano.

COL. Yes, but I will have the sight of your charming face to console me. Bravo! Charming! Ravishing!

[NELLY *plays dreamy melody while the* COLONEL *backs surreptitiously toward chair containing military boots.* NELLY *continues, while the* COLONEL *obtains boots from chair.*]

NEL. What a beautiful passage that is. I hope you uphold me in my preference for the minor keys?

COL. [*approaching former position near piano, holding boots behind him*]. Yes, yes. The keys to the situation; I've got them at last!

NEL. [*as she plays*]. But, Colonel, you are not listening.

COL. I beg your pardon, but I am. I was always fond of martial music; it sets my feet going. [*Aside, as he marches about restlessly.*] That's the best excuse yet.

NEL. [*indignantly*]. I knew you weren't really listening. You see it isn't martial music at all.

COL. [*more frantic with his feet than ever*]. Oh, excuse me, of course, not. Rag time. Makes one do the cake-walk and all that. [*Aside, as he begins grotesque cake-walk.*] Now, that *is* an excuse. [*Cake-walks, grinning idiotically at* NELLY *as if enjoying it.*]

NEL. I'll not play another note. [*Brings down hands with angry crash on keys.*] What is the matter? Will you kindly be quiet long enough to tell me? [*He slides behind screen, still concealing boots in his hands.*]

COL. [*from behind screen*]. My dear Mrs. Wemyss, you have hit upon a very painful subject. Don't come behind the screen, please. I'm screening something from you. I was pretending to be gay [*sound of boot dropping on floor behind screen*], but there was a dark secret concealed in my boots—heart, I mean [*sound of other boot dropping,* NELLY *appearing greatly mystified*], which I dared not reveal.

[NELLY *rises and comes down stage, frowning thoughtfully as if pondering over his meaning. As she stands there, and while she answers him, he cautiously peeps out and emerges from behind screen. He wears military boots and cautiously tiptoes over to window where he deposits riding-boots behind curtain.*]

NEL. I suppose you mean that you had no right to make those protestations of affection to me the other day—that you were even then bound to another.

COL. Upon my word——

NEL. [*imperiously waving him to silence without looking at him*]. I never knew an attractive man yet that wasn't bound to another. It seems to become a sort of habit.

COL. [*standing back of her, but very near*]. No, no, I am not bound to another. I am free [*waves right leg joyously*]. Free as air [*waves left leg in triumph*]. The airing was just what they needed.

NEL. [*facing him in astonishment*]. Was—what—what—needed?

COL. [*approaching her gallantly and bowing, his hand over his heart*]. Permit me to renew my protestations of undying affection. Hear me swear!

NEL. Oh, heavens! don't! It reminds me of my first husband.

COL. Ah! Nelly! Nelly! You know how I love you.

NEL. Yes, I know you love me, but have you carefully weighed the responsibilities you would assume in taking me for your wife? I love society, balls, theatres, races, and——

COL. But, Nelly. [*Aside.*] The change of boots was useless —the powders still are working! [*Aloud.*] I will love *anything* you love. We will go to the theatre every day and the races every night—no, on the contrary—[*aside*] those cursed powders!

NEL. I am passionately fond of new toilets, jewelry, old lace; I am a coquette——

COL. [*suffering*]. Heavens! again! [*Wiggles feet.*]

NEL. Ah, that word startles you!

COL. Startled me? I assure you I leaped with joy. If there is anything I adore, it is a coquette; it is my ideal. [*Aside.*] Will this torture never cease? [*Paces nervously up and down the room.*]

NEL. And, Colonel—[*Looks around after him.*] Ah! there you are. You know that the theatre, toilets, jewelry, and all that, are very dear, very dear.

COL. I am rich. We will ruin ourselves, if necessary. [*Aside.*] Since I can not get away, I must devise some plan to get her out of the room. [*Looks about and sniffs suspiciously.*]

NEL. What are you looking for?

COL. I may be mistaken, but have you a fire anywhere in the house?

NEL. Yes, I think there is one in my room.

COL. Do you not detect an odor of smoke? Permit me to go and see if everything is all right—

NEL. No, no—everything is topsy-turvy there. I will go myself. [*She goes into her room. The Colonel stoops behind sofa. Nelly returns immediately.*]

COL. Foiled! But I must pull them off.

NEL. You have been deceived, Colonel. Mathilda has put my fire out.

COL. Are you sure?

NEL. Certainly, the fire is completely extinguished.

COL. Was that the only fire in the house? [*Aside.*] Why didn't I remove the powders when I took off the other boots?

NEL. There may be one in the kitchen, but I think not.

COL. I do not wish to startle you, but I should not be surprised if the smoke came from there. Do you not smell it?

NEL. No.

COL. Well, I do, and to be on the safe side, I will go and look. [*Starts away, she detains him.*]

NEL. You go to the kitchen? What are you thinking of? To satisfy you I will go myself. [*She goes out.*]

COL. [*alone—stoops behind sofa*]. Sacred bayonets! those powders stick like pitch, and burning pitch at that. Ouch! Ah! At last, they are off! [*Stooping behind couch he evidently removes boots and takes out powders and puts on boots again. Takes a box of powders also from his pocket.*] And now where shall I put them? I have it; the window. [*Goes to window.*] Impossible! There is a man across the way watching the window through a telescope. Someone is coming. Into my boot, you torment,—and this infernal box—into the other boot, you miserable accomplice. [NELLY *enters.*] Just in time! [*Sets boots inside curtains again.*]

NEL. Really, my poor Colonel, fate is against you to-day. The fire has not been lighted yet. But you look pale. Are you ill?

COL. Mrs. Wemyss, I will tell you all. [*Aside.*] No, I dare not. She will laugh at me. I will be jealous of the man with the telescope.

NEL. Well?

COL. Since you insist, I will tell you. I am jealous, yes, jealous, for I love you with all the passion of an ardent heart; and when I think of others who surround you, flatter you, and lovingly gaze on you, as that young puppy with the telescope is doing at this moment, I——

NEL. What, you have seen him?

COL. Have I seen him? Oh, woman, woman, we lay bare our hearts to you only to be asked if we have seen him. [*Aside.*] I have not the slightest idea what I am saying, but I must say something.

NEL. Your reproach is unjust. You will apologize when you learn to what extremities I have been reduced to rid myself of that obnoxious person. For eight days have I arrayed a chair in a dressing-gown [*brings chair and dummy from adjoining room*] hoping that he would take it for my husband. But, alas! I did not count on his telescope.

COL. He has discovered the trick?

NEL. Yes, this morning. And now you owe me reparation. You must put on the dressing-gown, and, tenderly leaning on my shoulder, you must come to the window with me. Then you will be punished and I be revenged at the same time. Will you do it?

COL. Will I do it? My head reclining on your shoulder— [*rushes into garments*].

NEL. [*up stage at window*]. Now, my gallant astronomer of the wonderful telescope, we will test the boasted power of your glasses. [*Goes toward window and sees the Colonel's boots projecting from underneath curtain.*] Ah! too late, the wretch has carried out his threat. What shall I do? If the Colonel springs upon him he may be killed. I must gain time [*turns toward* COLONEL]. Oh, Colonel, you look perfect in that dressing-gown, so handsome you quite overcome me. I feel faint. Would you mind going into the other room to get me a glass of water? Take your time. I wish to recover my self-possession.

COL. [*aside*]. I believe she loves me after all. [*Turns toward her.*] By all means a glass of water, and I would it were nectar, my dearest Mrs. Wemyss, my irresistible Nelly. [*Bows and exits.*]

NEL. Thank heaven, that danger is past. Now, I will give the villain one last chance to escape. [*Addressing the boots.*] If you are fully alive to the danger of your situation, you will escape at once. Go! [*Opens the door.*] He does not stir. [*The* COLONEL *knocks at the other door.*] You hear, sir, my husband is coming. For the love of heaven go before he enters. [*The* COLONEL *knocks again.*] One moment, Colonel. You hear that, sir? He is a colonel! Now, for the last time, will you go? No? Then your blood be upon your own head. [*Opens the door.*] Enter, Colonel, and avenge the honor of your wife.

COL. [*enters carrying glass of water*]. What?

NEL. A man has dared to enter my window!

COL. Where is the wretch?

NEL. Hiding behind the curtains! Look! you can see his feet!

COL. [*aside*]. Cæsar's ghost! She means my boots! [*Aloud.*] Nelly, I beg of you to retire to your chamber. These scenes of violence and bloodshed are unfit for the eyes of your sex.

NEL. Colonel, let me remain; I am brave, and if you are wounded—

COL. If you love me, I entreat you to retire from the room for but a single moment. [*Drinks water himself.*]

NEL. I obey, but be merciful. Colonel, promise me you will avoid bloodshed.

COL. I solemnly swear it!

[*Nelly goes out of room.*]

COL. [*goes to curtains and seizes boots; the box of powders falls unobserved by him to floor*]. Now, you wretch, I could kill you like a dog, but I prefer to send you where you came from. [*Takes off military boots and puts on riding boots.*] Un-

der my feet, you scoundrel, and beg for mercy! [*Nelly gives smothered shriek from other room as if listening to struggle.*] What, you dare to resist,—take that—and that. And now [*opens the window and throws boots out*] out of the window, coward, villain, thief—

NEL. [*opens door and screams*]. You have killed him!

COL. [*barring view of window*]. Madam, you are avenged!

NEL. Take the hand of the woman you have rescued, and I shall have a husband to be proud of. [*Stoops and picks up box of powders.*] But what is this?

COL. [*aside*]. Those diabolical powders!

NEL. The unfortunate wretch must have dropped it in the struggle. [*Opens box.*] Why, it is a box of powders!

COL. [*innocently*]. Gunpowder?

NEL. No, just ordinary powders.

COL. Are they hot to the touch?

NEL. No, why do you ask?

COL. Merely curiosity. After we are married I *may* tell you a story about them. [*Kisses her hand.*]

NEL. My hero! [*He embraces her.*]

CURTAIN.

A HUSBAND IN CLOVER.

H. C. MERIVALE.

Text and Stage-Business Edited and Revised
By PAULINE PHELPS and MARION SHORT.

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CHARACTERS: MR. HORACE WITHERSPOON.
MRS. LYDIA WITHERSPOON.

SCENE: Breakfast parlor handsomely furnished. Fireplace and grate with lighted fire, L. U. E.; breakfast table, handsomely appointed, L.; lady's easy-chair and footstool, up L.; couch, up C., with foot toward the audience; small round table, R.; easy-chair and footstool L. of it; desk with drawer against flat, R.; door, R. I. E.; chairs; pictures; clock.

[HORACE, *dressed in morning-jacket and slippers, discovered in easy-chair, R., reading newspaper.*]

HORACE. Eight o'clock! This quiet life will be the death of me, and it's all Bunbury's fault [*folds newspaper and puts it aside as he talks*]. A few months ago I told him about Lydia. I dwelt upon her eyelashes, her angelic disposition. "Go in and win, old boy," said he. I went in and won! [*Sighs dolefully.*] Ho, hum! When you are married where are you? Why, *there* you are! Oh, this quiet life will be the death of me! There's about as much variety in it as there is in a bread-crumb. Oh, for a row. My kingdom for a row! [*Rises, goes to desk, unlocks drawer and gets out manuscript book which he begins to examine.*] Sole relic of my happy bachelor days, journal of my life, record of my impressions. [*Sits at desk and takes up pen.*] This morning's

impression [*dips pen in ink and writes*]: "Lydia vegetates as usual. She cannot be said to live. She has no temper, no originality, she's as mild as a lamb without mint-sauce. I have married a mint-sauceless lamb." [*Looks up proudly, poising pen in air.*] "Mint-sauceless lamb" exactly expresses it, [*tragically*] and I with a perfect passion for mint-sauce! [*Begins to turn over leaves of book.*] Ah, how many lovely ladies are buried in these pages! Buried, yet alive, divinely alive! Alive and perfectly indexed! [*Reads with enthusiasm.*] "Maria Johnson—emaciated, wistful, consumptive and interesting style." [*Comments, looking up.*] Lydia's health is so continuous and commonplace. Ho, hum! [*Reads.*] "Zenobia Masters—fashionable and masculine style, sparkling and horsey." [*Comments.*] Lydia wouldn't sparkle if you set a match to her. Ho, hum! This quiet life will be the death of me! [*Reads.*] "Adele Jones—passionate, peppery, jealous style—savage as a tigress." [*Comments.*] What rapture must it be to have a savage tigress for a wife! [*Reads.*] "Caroline Bunbury, poetic and sentimental style, languorous, gushing and imaginative!" [*Comments.*] Lydia has no style at all. Ha! Another entry, an inspiration! [*Writes; reading his entries aloud.*] "My life is like a lake without a ripple, a sun without a spot, a bed without a crease." [*Looks up, listens, hastily locks book in desk-drawer and comes down stage.*] The rustle of my wife's dress on the stairs, my wife inside the rustle. Ho, hum! [*Imitates her.*] "Ready for breakfast, Horry, my love?" What an existence! "Isn't Horry going to give his Lydia a kiss?" Insufferable! Ho, hum! [*Despairingly throws himself into easy-chair, exaggerated sprawling attitude.*]

[*Enter* LYDIA, *from door,* R. *She goes behind table round to* L. HORACE, *leaning fondly over his chair.*]

LYDIA. Ready for breakfast, my love?

HOR. [*aside*]. What did I say?

LYD. [*kneeling by his side, affectionately*]. What a dear old boy it is! Isn't Horry going to give his Lydia a kiss?

HOR. [*aside*]. I knew it.

LYD. No! Then his Lydia will give her Horry one. [*Kisses him. She then sits on stool at his feet in front of him, her back to audience.*] I've got a treat for you this morning if you're a good boy. I'm going to wait on you myself.

HOR. Why? Where's the maid?

LYD. I've given her leave for the day; she's gone to see her aunt at Aldershott.

HOR. I'd like to get shot for a change.

LYD. Does that mean that you're afraid I shan't make you comfortable? Don't be alarmed! Mary got everything ready before she started. You've got a good fire, you see.

HOR. [*in a melancholy tone*]. I always have.

LYD. And I hope your breakfast will be to your taste.

HOR. [*still more melancholy*]. It always is.

LYD. There's a perfect mutton-chop for you—just as you like it. [*Rises.*] It must be about ready. [*Crosses to fire-place, where the chop is on the hob, covered in dish.*]

HOR. [*in despair*]. The old, old story! For three months I have been doing nothing else but eat mutton-chops. If I don't escape from this life of torture. [*Rises, and crosses to* R. *chair at breakfast table, yawning as he goes.*]

LYD. Here it is, by the fire; and you never saw it, you blind old darling! [*Places it before him, removing cover.*] Look—under-done, just to the right turn!

HOR. Under-done—I should think it was! [*Aside.*] I'll try and get up a row.

LYD. Isn't that as you like it? [*Pouring out tea, etc.*]

HOR. What!—*raw?* Do you take me for a boating undergraduate or a tiger from the Zoological Gardens? [*Makes ferocious, argumentative gestures at her, his knife in one hand, his fork in the other.*]

LYD. Well, never mind, darling—I'll put it on the fire again, and watch it myself [*rises*] while you go and dress!

HOR. [*sulkily*]. I suppose I *must* dress? [*Aside.*] What an existence!

LYD. If my boy doesn't dress, and pretty quickly, he'll be late for his office.

HOR. As if anybody ever could be late for my office. They say time was made for slaves—and government clerks are slaves. There's no earthly use in my being at my office before ten. However, I may as well go and dress. [*Rises and crosses to* R.] Fancy having to dress every morning all the rest of my life!

LYD. [L. C.]. That's right, darling; the chop shall be all right, and I'll keep your tea warm for you. Now, don't be lazy, but go along, and we'll have the coziest of tête-à-tête breakfasts!

HOR. [*aside*]. Oh! I must escape from this life of torture. [*Exit Horace, door* R.]

LYD. [*C.*]. He's crosser than ever this morning. Take care, take care, Master Horace, my stock of patience is very nearly at an end. [*Takes key from pocket and unlocks drawer in desk.*] No secrets between husband and wife; I'll study the latest efforts of your literary genius. [*Produces his book and sits on chair,* L. *of table,* R., *reading.*] "Damn Bunbury." [*Stops suddenly as if shocked, looks round.*] Oh! [*Reads.*] "Lydia doesn't live, she vegetates." Do I? [*Reads.*] "Sometimes I think she is like a stuffed woman"—a stuffed woman! [*Reads.*] "My life is like a lake without a ripple, a sun without a spot, a bed without a crease; I feel like a bread-crumb." [*Shuts book with a bang; rises and locks it in drawer—speaks as she does so.*] Well, he shall see, he shall see. [*As she crosses to table.*] You want sentiment—temper—passion—jealousy, do you? You shall have it, oh, you shall have it. Your chop not cooked enough, isn't it; I'll *cook* it for you. [*Throws it on fire.*] Ripples on your lake, spots on your sun, creases on your bed, you shall have enough of them. And if I *am* a stuffed woman, you shall see how the stuffing tastes. Here he comes. [*Sits* L.]

[*Enter* HORACE, *door* R., *dressed in morning-dress.*]

HOR. [*aside,* R.]. My shirt was clean, aired, and laid out; there were buttons on both my wristbands; my boots were blacked, and my hot water was *hot.* What an existence! Now I begin

to understand what drives men to suicide. [*Aloud, sniffing.*] What an odd smell of burning. [*Goes to table,* L.] Now, Lydia, as to that chop.

LYD. [*rises, takes chop from fire with tongs*]. Here, dear [*extending it toward him*].

HOR. [*amazed*]. Eh! What's the joke?

LYD. [*at top of table*]. There's no joke; I've cooked it a little more; that's all. [*Holding it under his nose, then dropping it on plate before him.*]

HOR. You've cooked it a great deal more. I'm disgusted. I don't want any breakfast. Why, it's a cinder!

LYD. [*comes down,* L., *holding tongs in hand and assuming sentimental tone and manner*]. Cinder! no doubt! like the ashes of a wasted life! [*Crosses to* C., *tongs in hand.*] For what is life but a fire that burns out? [*Aside.*] Poetic and sentimental style—Caroline Bunbury!

HOR. [*turning round on chair in amazement.*] What in the name of—?

LYD. [*speaking in assumed tone as before*]. Horace, do you believe in the immortality of the soul?

HOR. Of course! Put down the tongs.

LYD. [*dreamily,* R. C.]. Oh! for the existence of a soul—bodiless, infinite! To be a passing cloud! a puff of smoke! To have wings like a swallow!

HOR. [*rising*]. What *are* you talking about?

LYD. [*still in her assumed tone*]. To be above all earthly needs. No butchers! no bakers! To be reckless of the price of meat! Indifferent to the exhaustion of coal. To be a soul, in short, with wings, wings, wings! [*Extends arms in air, and goes* R. *and back to* C.]

HOR. [*aside*]. The "mint-sauceless lamb" is sprouting wings and wants to fly! Well, anything for a change.

LYD. [C., *in same tone*]. Horace, what do you call the bird with wings of heavenly blue?

HOR. Which?—a blue bottle?

LYD. [*contemptuously*]. Man! I mean yon little flutterer, that haunts the willows by the murmuring stream, that floats—floats—floats!

HOR. [*aside*]. Now, the "mint-sauceless lamb" wants to float. Well, I'm beginning to want an egg. [*Sits at table and begins to break an egg.*]

LYD. I'm glad you don't want any breakfast. Eating is so unsentimental. Let me sit at your feet and rest my head upon your bosom [*does so*]. Darling, what did you say was the name of those birds?

HOR. Oh, damn those birds! Look here, Lydia, it's too early in the morning for bills and coos.

LYD. [*aside, starting away from him*]. Tired of the sentimental and poetic, eh? Then here goes for the consumptive and interesting. [*Aloud.*] Oh, this pain—this pain! [*Places hand to right side, and sinks on ground at end of couch, so that her head rests on it.*]

HOR. [*concerned*]. Are you in pain?

LYD. No, the pain's in me. Ah, here, in my heart! [*Her hand on her right side.*]

HOR. No, no; excuse me. Anatomically speaking, that's your liver.

LYD. My liver? How vulgar! but no doubt you are a better judge of the liver than of the heart. Ah!—I've broken something, I know—something internal.

HOR. See a doctor.

LYD. [*sadly*]. A doctor. It's too late for that; yesterday he might have been in time, but now—[*rises languidly, while Horace rises and sits on end of couch, as she goes to her own drawer in desk, and produces an account-book*]. But don't be uneasy, Horace, I have left my accounts in excellent order. Look at them. [*Extends book toward him.*]

HOR. I don't want to look at them.

LYD. [*stamping foot*]. I wish you to look at them—it is my last dying request.

HOR. Oh, very well. [*Takes book; aside, touching his forehead.*] I begin to suspect where the something broken is. Let's see. [*Opens book and reads.*] "Eighteenth, radishes, ten cents; Twentieth, spring chickens, one dollar and thirteen cents; Twenty-first, a *horse!*" A horse? What, to eat?

LYD. No, to ride. A capital bargain; go on. [*Walking aside with a swagger.*] Zenobia Masters—masculine style!

HOR. "Twenty-third, pepper; Twenty-fourth, a saddle!" What—of mutton?

LYD. No, leather.

HOR. Yes, but our butcher *calls* it mutton.

LYD. Nonsense? Go on—a saddle—

HOR. "And harness!" What do you want with saddle and harness?

LYD. For the horse, of course. You don't suppose I ride barebacked?

HOR. [*enraged—rises, and crosses,* R.]. I've had enough of this. I don't choose you to ride at all—barebacked or otherwise. I can't afford it.

LYD. [C.]. What a mean huckster is man! But never mind that. [*Assuming a fast manner.*] I'll afford it for you. [*Sits on corner of table as if on horseback.*] On, there, Flossie. Don't be afraid of the cops. They can't overtake us. And even if we run over a baby or two, to say nothing of dogs, or lazy government clerks on their way to work—my old man will have to pay the fine if the cops pull us in. On, there, girl! [*Turns to Horace, slapping her knee as she addresses him.*] Shan't I look a cheese in the park, my pippin?

HOR. [R., *horrified*]. Pippin! cheese! This is intolerable! I must have changed my wife in the cloak-room last night! But I'll command her to give up that horse. Listen, Lydia. You have sworn to obey me!

LYD. When?

HOR. At the hymeneal altar, of course.

LYD. At the fiddlesticks! I never swore to obey you in my life.

HOR. Not to—"love, honor and obey?"

LYD. Not I! The clergyman did mention something of the kind, but my wreath was scratching me at the time, and I wasn't attending. Obedience, indeed! Other women may obey, I shan't.

HOR. I tell you that you owe me obedience, and you owe me honor!

LYD. Very well. Then I'll do as *you* do when you owe anything.

HOR. What's that?

LYD. Shan't pay it!

HOR. Then I shall exercise the rights of a husband, and compel you. Where's your horse?

LYD. Where should he be? In his stable, to be sure.

HOR. I shall dispose of him to the nearest cabman.

LYD. You will?

HOR. *I will!*

LYD. Quite done—have you? [HORACE *nods—she snaps her fingers.*] There, *that's* my answer. I expect my horse here directly.

HOR. I am glad of it; for I shall tell him my mind.

LYD. *That* won't take long!

HOR. [*enraged*]. You *shan't* ride—you'll ruin us both!

LYD. I *shan't!* I've got a capital seat.

HOR. Yes; but you can't keep it.

LYD. Bah!

HOR. Booh! Look here—I can't afford a horse; and I *won't!*

LYD. How mean! Your country pays you twelve hundred dollars a year!

HOR. How far do you think we can go on that?

LYD. I don't want to go any further than the park. Then, look at your private means.

HOR. Yes; exceedingly mean, and peculiarly private; so private, that nobody knows anything of them!

LYD. Then, think of mamma's allowance to *me.*

HOR. Generous mamma! Three hundred dollars a year—*unpaid!*

LYD. And you talk of not having money! It's lucky for you mamma's not here!

HOR. Well, it *is—unusually* lucky!

LYD. Don't abuse my mother.

HOR. I won't.

LYD. And pay for my horse. [*Aside.*] Wonder how he likes the masculine style now?

HOR. I shan't! Money or no money, I've none for you. [*Rises to* R. C.]

LYD. [*with a scream, advancing to* L. C.]. Ah! he acknowledges it!

HOR. Acknowledges what?

LYD. You've got some for somebody else. Horace, you're in love with another woman! [*Aside.*] Adela Jones—passionate and jealous style.

HOR. Stuff and nonsense, one is quite enough.

LYD. You are! you are! a little bird told me that you were deceiving me.

HOR. Heavens! That blue bottle-bird again? I'm going to my office. [*Crosses toward door* R.]

LYD. [*running up to door,* R., *placing her back to it*]. Not yet. You shall hear me through. [HORACE *in despair crosses to chair at breakfast-table, and drops into it—following him up, and in a tone of great severity.*] You came home late last night, after leaving me at Mrs. Glossop's. Where did you go?

HOR. [*in chair,* L.]. I went to the club.

LYD. Easy to say *that.* We know what *that* means. What *things* men are!

HOR. I tell you I went to the club! I played a couple of games at billiards with Bunbury.

LYD. Show me your purse.

HOR. What for?

LYD. Show me your purse, and be quick about it.

HOR. Very well—there!

LYD. There were three dollars and seventy-five cents in it last night. [*Examines it.*] Now—there are—only three dollars. [*With great solemnity.*] What have you done with the seventy-five cents?

HOR. Well—I—

LYD. Don't descend to prevarication, and think before you speak.

HOR. I tell you I played two games.

LYD. And *lost,* of course. Well, two games, forty cents! Isn't that right? What then?

HOR. Then—

LYD. [*sharply*]. Make haste!

HOR. Well—twenty-five cents for a brandy-and-soda.

LYD. No doubt; I know your partiality for intoxicating drinks.

HOR. [*indignantly*]. Brandy and soda is *not* an intoxicating drink, woman.

LYD. Well?—then—

HOR. Then—then—I—let me see. [LYDIA *stamps her foot impatiently.*] Then I gave five cents to a beggar as I left the club.

LYD. Five cents to a beggar, and grudges his own wife a horse! What things men are!

HOR. Well—

LYD. [*vehemently*]. There is still five cents to account for. *What did you do* with *that?*

HOR. Hang me if I remember.

LYD. You don't remember? Horace! you gave it to the woman you love! [*Goes* R.]

HOR. [*rises*]. Lydia. [*Approaches her.*]

LYD. Don't come near me, vile betrayer! Is the creature pretty?

HOR. [*goes up to fire*]. There is *no* creature!

LYD. And my life is given to this man! What a piece of work is man, as Hamlet says. He marries you against your will—

HOR. [*suddenly approaching her,* L. C.]. Come, I say—

LYD. Don't interrupt me; and ten months afterward he wastes all the wealth which a liberal country pours into his lap, in quarterly payments, in diamonds which shine—who knows where—on satins which adorn—who knows whom? While to the wife who sits at home to mend his shirts, and guard his honor—[*goes* R., *then turns quickly on him*]. Horace, what have you done with that five cents?

HOR. This is unendurable. [*Crosses to* L. *corner, suddenly making a bolt for door,* R.] Good-morning!

LYD. [*rushes up behind table to* R., *and confronts him*]. You are going to see Aurelia! [*Falls on her knees, clasping his hands.*] Do you love Aurelia well?

HOR. [*walking backward to* L. C., *as* LYDIA *follows still on her knees*]. I don't know anybody of the name.

LYD. [*still on her knees, imploringly*]. What has she done to make you worship her so? Tell me, tell me! That I may turn her own arms against her—that I may learn from my rival how to win you back again. Never go to her any more, and I will forgive you the past, and never ask her for that five cents! Send back her letters. Where *are* her letters? [*Puts her hands into his breast coat pocket, takes one out, and crosses to* L. *corner.*] Ha, here is one!

HOR. [*goes up to couch, and sits*]. Read it, for goodness' sake, and satisfy yourself.

LYD. I *will.* [*Opens letter and reads.*] "Be a good fellow, and lend me that blue frock coat of yours.—Yours, Roderick."

HOR. There, you see!

LYD. [L.]. Roderick! nobody is called such a name now.

I see it all! she writes to you under an alias, to guard against accidents, and disarm suspicion.

HOR. I assure you, Roderick is a fellow in our office. How can he be a woman, and want a blue frock coat?

LYD. She means to follow you in the disguise of a man. Perhaps she will try to enter this house as a butler! Oh, the craft of that woman! [*Sits, crying,* R.]

HOR. [*crosses to her*]. Now, look here, Lydia, as a gentleman, and a government clerk—I give you my word of honor—[LYDIA *sobbing hysterically.*] I repeat I give you my sacred word. [LYDIA *crying.*] Lydia—I—oh! confound it. [*Crosses in a passion to his chair at table,* L.] If there is one thing I hate more than another, it is a jealous woman!

LYDIA [*aside*]. Good! The stuffed woman may conquer after all. [*Sobbing.*] Who—oo—oo—ever would have thought this co—co—could happen when I married you.

HOR. [L.] Who—oo—oo, indeed? I wish somebody had told us. Your parents said you were an angel; and they may be right, for I never saw one, only if they are, the idea of that article in which I have been brought up is singularly imaginative, that's all. It strikes me that your parents let me in for it.

LYD. [*behind him*]. You are thinking of and wishing for Aurelia?

HOR. [*turning around on her*]. I *am, there!*

LYD. He confesses and glories in his shame. [*Fiercely—as she seizes tongs from table.*] And shall I leave him to this woman? Never! [*Brandishes tongs above her head.*]

HOR. [*rises precipitately to* R.]. Come, I say, no tongs—unless you allow me the poker.

LYD. [*taking* L. *corner, flourishing tongs*]. Ha, ha! coward! He's afraid to die.

HOR. [R., *shouting*]. Put down the fire-irons!

LYD. [*throwing them down, up* C.]. Ah, I am rightly punished!

HOR. [*uneasily, going toward her*]. What for?

LYD. [*mysteriously*]. Hush. [*Embracing him,* R. C.] Good-bye, Horace. Let us part friends. Good-bye, forever! Let me look my last upon those dear eyes—that open brow—that shapeless nose. You see, I smile. Farewell, farewell! [*Exits romantically, door,* R.]

HOR. [*advances, C., looking after her*]. Well, this life of excitement will be the death of me. Oh, Bunbury, Bunbury! was it for this I married? I, who hoped to find in marriage a life of calm and blissful monotony—a tranquil existence, without storm or ripple.

[*Enter* LYDIA, *her hair hanging down, carrying cup in hand.*]

LYD. [*aside*]. Impassioned and romantic style. [*Advances,* C.] If I don't give you passion and romance enough to last you the rest of your life! [*Aloud, in tragic tone.*] All this must end! Grant me courage, heaven! Where is the teaspoon? [*Goes to chair,* R. *of table,* L.]

HOR. [*rushing forward,* C.]. Lydia, what are you doing?

LYD. [*coolly*]. Still here? I hoped you had gone to there.

HOR. [C.]. What is the meaning of all this? Tell me!

LYD. [*at table*]. Certainly! [*Stirring the liquid with spoon.*] I am going to poison myself—I love another!

HOR. [*bewildered*]. Yes, of course—I'm another.

LYD. [*dreamily*]. You're another! No, no, I loved him before I married you—before ever I met you.

HOR. And you never told me.

LYD. I forgot. [*Puts cup and spoon on table.*] There are so many things to think of when you get married. [*Rises.*]

HOR. His name?

LYD. [*as she crosses in front to* R. *corner*]. Alphonso!

HOR. What a name! His profession?

LYD. A professor of ordnance!

HOR. Of what?

LYD. Ordnance! Cannon! He's a billiard-marker. He was young, beautiful, and I loved him. [*Crosses over to* L.] He is gone—gone to America, to make a name and cannons; while I

am bound to another. At this moment, perhaps, he lies lost, is dying in the boundless desert, in the grip of the hyena, or the mountain ape!

HOR. [R.]. I sincerely hope he does.

LYD. My place is by his side. [*Goes toward* HORACE, *now up* R., *behind table.*] Give me gold that I may follow him. What shall I do for gold? Ah! my jewels will give me the means. [*Going* R.]

HOR. [*intercepting her*]. My presents to you!

LYD. You taunt me with your paltry gifts. There is no reasoning with passion, no *meum* and *teum* in love. Do you mean to let me poison myself?

HOR. Never! [*Grasps her arm.*] You might die on the premises.

LYD. Monster! You won't let me poison myself? Then I shall die of imagination, for my imagination has certainly become terribly inflamed through your cruelty. Oh, my head, my head! My cranium, my cranium! My brain, my brain! [*Gasps and staggers about,* HORACE *dodging her and watching her uneasily.*] Before I go—give me—give me—Aurelia's address. I wish only this simple thing—so I may haunt her and you forever. Ah! [*Throws herself into a chair, stamps her feet violently, sobs and goes into hysterics generally.*]

HOR. Lydia, try and compose yourself, and I'll do anything you like. Lydia, do you want something to eat? Do you want something to breathe—to smell—to drink? Lydia! [*Despairingly throws up his hands, as she continues to moan, and crosses to other side of room.*] Good heavens! This life of excitement will be the death of me. Oh, Bunbury, Bunbury, was it for this sort of an existence I married? Ha, she's quiet! She must have fainted. Well, it's just as well until I recover my bewildered senses. [*Sits at table.*] Ah, Lydia, if I could only lead the quiet and happy life I used to with you before this cruel change; if I could only have you back again—dear "mint-sauceless lamb" as you were, if I could only hear you say as you used—

[LYDIA *rises and comes round to his side quietly as at commencement.*]

LYD. Ready for breakfast, my love?

HOR. Eh? [*Starts in astonishment.*]

LYD. [*kneels as at first*]. What a dear old boy it is. Isn't Horry going to give his Lydia a kiss? No? Then I shall give you one. Why, you haven't had a morsel to eat, and it's *so* late. [*Rises and goes up to chiffonier,* R., *as* HORACE *rises, and crosses to* L., *rubbing his eyes, bewildered.*] Have a glass of sherry and a biscuit before you start for your office. You've been asleep and I could not bear to wake you, but never mind the loss of a little time. I'll tell you what we'll do. We'll go up the river and have a little dinner at Claremont.

HOR. By Jove, I've been dreaming the oddest dream!

LYD. Haven't you money enough? Get it from your drawer, there, and if you haven't got your key, take mine. [*Showing it—goes to drawer and holds up the MS. laughingly.*]

HOR. Phew!—your key—my drawer—the journal of my life! Caroline!—Maria!—Zenobia! I have not been dreaming. But I have deserved the nightmare you gave me just the same. My darling, my dearest, what can I do to show my penitence?

LYD. [*picks up tongs and hands them to him*]. Here are the tongs. Guess.

HOR. [*taking manuscript in tongs and advancing toward fire*]. Zenobia, Maria, Caroline, you may go to—[*drops book in fire*] forever! [*Turns, and extends arms toward* LYDIA.] Lydia!

LYD. Horace! [*Rushes into his arms; he embraces her fondly.*]

CURTAIN.

EARTHQUAKES PREFERRED.

MRS. M. L. RAYNE.

He wrote a hurried letter home
From California's strand:
"DEAR SISTER: I am much alarmed
O'er earthquakes in the land,

"And so I send you by express,
To save from coming harm,
My treasures rare, my precious boys,
To visit the old farm."

The maiden aunt rejoiced to greet
Dear Brother Henry's boys;
They wakened up the dull old farm
With much tumultuous noise.

They broke the fences up to ride
To "Boston" on the rails,
Used Auntie's chopping trays for boats,
And tore up sheets for sails.

"DEAR BROTHER," wrote their Auntie then,
"Your treasures safely came,
I went to the express, and there
Receipted for the same.

"But now in order to preserve
My mental equipoise,
I'll take the earthquakes in exchange,
And send you back your boys."

VILLAIN AND VICTIM.

W. R. WALKES.

Text and Stage-Business Edited and Revised
By PAULINE PHELPS and MARION SHORT.

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CHARACTERS: ADOLPHUS (devoted to his wife, MILLICENT, but temporarily a villain).
MILLICENT (fondly attached to her husband, ADOLPHUS, although for time being his victim).

SCENE: MILLICENT'S drawing-room. Necessary furniture: two chairs, R. C. and L. C., on one of which are a cushion and an antimacassar. ADOLPHUS and MILLICENT are discovered in opposite corners of room studying their parts in a forthcoming amateur melodrama. With play-books in hand, and with complete unconcern in each other's doings, they walk up and down room, or kneel upon floor, waving arms and muttering, in all the agonies of study.

ADOLPHUS [*suddenly ceasing for a moment to grind his teeth and mutter*]. Darling! Amateur theatricals are a lot of work.

MILLICENT [*rising from hearthrug on which she has been supplicating*]. Yes, my love. I'm afraid I've strained my memory trying to learn these lines. What do they prescribe for a strained memory, Dolly?

ADOL. A dose of forgettery, I should imagine. Will my sweetest be so very kind as to hear me my "exit speech" in the first act? [*Points to place in play-book, which he holds in his hand.*]

MILL. Of course, dear.

ADOL. Let me see, now. "Smiles sardonically." [*Contorts features into feeble grin.*] Is that all right?

MILL. [*admiringly*]. Oh, it's blood-curdling! [*Shudders.*] Boo!

ADOL. [*complacently*]. Yes, I thought it would be. I practised it before the glass this morning while shaving. You remember my shouts for sticking-plaster! [*His face is ornamented with black patches.*] But there, we must make some sacrifice in the cause of Art, musn't we, darling?

MILL. [*enthusiastically*]. Dolly, you're a hero. Ornamented with the scars of battle!

ADOL. [*with mild deprecation*]. No, my love, merely an enthusiast. However, to resume! "Walks to door with an air of determination." [*Moves to door in manner suggestive of Sir Henry, and wags his head, also imitatively.*] How's that, dear? I thought that just a slight suggestion of a great actor—eh, my love, always goes. Eh?

MILL. [*admiringly*]. Splendid! Only if your knees crack *much* louder the audience might hear them.

ADOL. I then fold my arms. [*Does so.*] *I* put that in. I thought it such a capital idea for the villain to fold his arms.

MILL. [*enthusiastically*]. Excellent, and so original, too!

ADOL. [*clears his throat*]. Hum! hum! [*Speaks in feeble, monotonous manner suggestive of very mildest of amateur villains.*] "Foiled, foiled for the moment, and by a stripling! But the time will come when I will drink thy heart's blood drop by drop, and sear thy puling, love-sick countenance with the hot iron of my boiling vengeance. Remember, tremble and beware! Farewell! no, I will not say farewell, but *au revoir.*" [*Goes out.*]

[MILLICENT, *who during foregoing has expressed strong emotion, sinks into chair, weeping.*]

ADOL. [*re-enters and rushes to her*]. Milly, my own little kitten! What's the matter?

MILL. You—you frightened me. Dolly, you were so real.

Oh, Dolly, dear! you couldn't be as wicked as that, could you, darling, even if you tried? [*Edges away from him.*]

ADOL. Wicked! I? [*Reproachfully.*] My darling! Do I not carry round the plate at church every Sunday?

MILL. Of course you do. Then, Dolly, you are a genius!

ADOL. [*with slight deprecation*]. No, my love, no!

MIL. Ah, you can't deceive me, and, although this will be your first appearance on any stage, I am convinced that you are a born actor—and I must kiss you. [*Does so.*] And now, if my popsey doesn't very much mind the trouble, I should so like to run through my soliloquy in the snowstorm.

ADOL. Delighted! [*Turns to place.*]

MILL. Let me see! Ah, yes. "Steals from the cottage with her infant in her arms." Oh, I want an infant and a shawl. Ah! this will do! [*Seizes sofa cushion and clasps it in arms.*] and this! [*Takes antimacassar from chair and places it on shoulders, then goes out by door and instantly re-enters; speaks in tame, unintelligent monotone.*] "What a cruel pitiless night! How cold the snow-flakes fall upon my cheeks! How loud the tempest roars! How bitter blows the icy blast that chills my very bones!" How's that?

ADOL. [*blowing his nose with emotion*]. My darling, it is too much; I can't stand it. The bare idea of my precious little wifey exposed to a downpour, and without even an umbrella, unmans me. Promise me, dearest, that if ever you are caught in the rain when out shopping, you will always take a cab.

MILL. [*very much touched*]. But, dear, they don't allow a cab in the shops. 'Twould take up too much room. Let me see, where was I? [*Picks up cushion; and* ADOLPHUS *hands her her book which she had dropped; she consults it.*] Oh, yes! "Through the cruel machinations of a heartless scoundrel." Oh, darling! forgive me for referring to you in that way! You know I don't mean it.

ADOL. [*ruefully*]. Well, I suppose it can't be helped, it's in the part.

MILL. [*sighs*]. Ah! but it goes to my heart to say it.

[*Monotoning.*] "Through the cruel machinations of a heartless scoundrel"—[*breaking off suddenly*]. Darling old scoundrel! [*Kisses him.*] "I am thrust forth into the bitter blast, helpless, hopeless, homeless!" [*Repeats the sentence, feeling for her words.*] "Helpless, hopeless, homeless."

ADOL. [*prompting*]. "Staggers."

MILL. Ah, yes! "Staggers." [*Sways to and fro, awkwardly.*] "My limbs are weary, I can no farther go. A strange faintness is creeping over me; the light grows dim. Help, help, I die." [*Sits down quietly on floor, and settles herself comfortably on cushion, which she has been using as property baby.*]

ADOL. [*affected*]. It is too, too heartrending: but, oh! what a superb impersonation! [*With conviction.*] There's no doubt about it, Milly, you are a heaven-born actress.

MILL. [*very pleased*]. Do you really think so?

ADOL. [*with decision*]. I am quite, quite certain.

MILL. You sweet old thing! [*Holds out her arms, and he sits by her side on floor; thoughtfully.*] But what a strange coincidence!

ADOL. What, darling?

MILL. That you and I who met, fell in love, and married in quite the ordinary way, should both turn out to be great actors.

ADOL. Ah, yes; most remarkable!

MILL. I suppose, Dolly, that if we were to go upon the stage we should at once leap to the very front rank of the profession.

ADOL. [*with complete conviction*]. Not a doubt of it, my love, and land on the pinnacle of fame.

MILL. What's the pinnacle made of, Dolly? I hope it doesn't hurt to land there.

ADOL. And now for our great scene together in the third act. We haven't tried it yet. [*They rise.*]

MILL. Oh, yes; that will be awfully jolly.

ADOL. You remember, darling, that you are the heiress to vast estates—a fact known only to myself—and that I would make you mine. But, unfortunately, you already have a husband

—that ass, Septimus Jones; he'll be awful in the part—so I, who am absolutely unscrupulous, stabbed him to the heart, and left him for dead in the last act, and am now persecuting you with my odious addresses.

MILL. [*laughing*]. Oh, Dolly, fancy your addresses being odious. You dear old ducky darling!

ADOL. My sweetest precious! [*They throw kisses to each other.*] But come, now! We both enter from the ruined abbey, by moonlight, where you have already been spurning me. Come along! [*They both go out of door, but immediately re-enter.*]

MILL. [*in tone of voice she would use if asking him to button her glove*]. "Unhand me, sirrah!" Oh, Dolly, you haven't got hold of me. And, besides—my foot's asleep. [*Stamps.*]

ADOL. I beg your pardon, love. [*Seizes her awkwardly.*]

MILL. "Unhand me, sirrah!" My foot tickles like a sneeze. [ADOLPHUS *lets his arm drop clumsily.*] "Your shameless proposal fills me with scorn and loathing. Miscreant, I hate you!" [*With effusion.*] Oh, Dolly darling, you do know better than that, don't you, dear?

ADOL. My sweetest own! [*Caresses her as she reclines in his arms; speaks as though telling an interesting anecdote.*] "Proud lady, I care not one single jot for thy contumely." [*Disengages himself from her with a start.*] Dear me! This is the wrong position. I beg your pardon, my darling. "I care not one single jot for thy contumely. That burning cheek, that flashing eye——" By the way, darling, could you manage to flash your eye a little? No, don't look cross-eyed! Flash it!

MILL. [*grimaces*].

ADOL. Thank you, love. [*As if continuing anecdote.*] "That burning cheek, that flashing eye, they do but kindle in my heart the fire of a consuming passion. Thou must and shalt be mine." [*Seizes her and drags her toward him; she nestles comfortably in his arms and strokes his face.*] No, no, my love, you must tear yourself away and—and—[*consults his play-book*] and regard me with a look of unutterable loathing.

MILL. [*piteously*]. Oh, Dolly, I couldn't, I really couldn't.

ADOL. [*persuasively*]. Try, darling, try! Think of something you dislike very much indeed—roast goose, for instance.

MILL. Very well, dear. [*Withdraws from his embrace and turns up her nose.*] How's that?

ADOL. Capital! You looked not only like roast goose but like a spoiled one. Now! [*Looks at book.*] "Points his arm at her threateningly." [*Does so.*] Eh? [*Again consults book.*] Oh, yes; "laughs sardonically." [*Emits three gentle chuckles.*] Ha! ha! ha! "Snaps his fingers." [*Does so feebly and inaudibly.*] "That for your scorn and loathing! I hold them in contempt."

MILL. "In contempt," that's my cue. Oh, yes. "Throws herself upon her knees before him." But, Dolly dear, I can't possibly kneel in the frock I am going to wear on "the night"; it'll crease it so. Does it matter?

ADOL. [*cheerfully*]. Not a bit. So sit down, my love, and make yourself comfortable. [*Arranges cushions for her on floor.*]

MILL. [*sits; plaintively*]. "Oh, sir, you have a mother"—[*cheerfully*], and what a dear old thing she is, Dolly, and so fond of baby. I never imagined that a mother-in-law could be so charming——

ADOL. [*reproachfully*]. My darling! That's not in the play.

MILL. Oh, I beg your pardon, love, I was forgetting. "Oh, sir, you have a mother—a fond, devoted mother—and in her name, I entreat, I implore you to spare the hapless creature who now kneels—I mean sits—before you. Be kind, be merciful!" My, but I feel worked up!

ADOL. [*mopping his eyes*]. Upon my word, darling, this is awfully trying to my feelings. It isn't acting at all; it's downright nature. It has quite put me off. Where were we? [*Consults part.*] Oh, yes! [*Chuckles again.*] "Ha! Ha! Ha!" I think I shall put that laugh in often.

MILL. Do, dear. It's most effective—sounds like coughing up a fish-bone.

ADOL. "Ha! Ha! Your tears, fair mistress——" By the way, darling, you forgot to weep.

MILL. Oh, yes! how stupid of me! [*Blubbers loudly.*]

ADOL. "Your tears, fair mistress, do but feed my passion. Weep on, sweet dame; but ere those eyes be dry, I'll bear thee hence unto my mountain fastness." You now get up, give a loud scream, cry out, "No, no," and we begin to struggle. [MILLICENT *rises and gives mild squeak and ladylike "No, no."*] Now for the struggle. [*He takes hold of her awkwardly, and they begin to sway.*]

MILL. [*suddenly breaking away from him*]. One moment, dear, I think I hear baby. [*Runs to door and listens.*] No, it's nothing, or else cats. I shall be so glad when that next tooth is through. I'm ready for the struggle.

ADOL. [*sympathetically*]. Yes, and it's such an exciting tooth—his first double one.

MILL. Yes, dear; what do we do next?

ADOL. [*consults book*]. I must seize you in my arms and carry you off, whilst you hammer my upturned face with your clenched fists.

MILL. [*with an air of decision*]. No, Dolly, I cannot. I positively cannot. What! hit my darling in his dear face, and possibly damage that nicest of noses. No, no, it is too much.

ADOL. But it's only pretence, my dearest, and you can tap me quite gently. Come now, be brave and do it.

MILL. Well, I'll try.

ADOL. [*tries unsuccessfully to lift her*]. No, my darling, I can't manage it. Would you mind standing on something? [*She gets on chair; he then takes her up in his arms awkwardly, and staggers with her for a step or two; meanwhile she gently strokes his head and finally kisses it; whereupon he deposits her upon her feet again.*] There, my love, I scarcely felt it.

MILL. [*dolefully*]. But it's horrid—even pretending to be angry with my Ducky-wucky. I don't like it at all.

ADOL. [*mournfully*]. And to tell you the truth, Milly darling, no more do I. For although the little fairy's taps wouldn't

harm a new-born beetle, yet the seemingly antagonistic attitude of my own little lovey stabs me here—here. [*Points to his heart and sinks into chair.*]

MIEL. [*runs to him and kneels beside him; consolingly*]. Dear little tender heart! and was it stabbed by the naughty wifey who never meant it? [*Rises and walks to and fro; indignantly.*] Oh, Dolly, Dolly, why should they have chosen *you* to act the villain? Why aren't you playing the hero?

ADOL. Why not, indeed! Ah, you may well ask that. [*Rises; sarcastically.*] Because it is Septimus Jones's Charity; Septimus Jones is getting up the performance and Septimus Jones thinks he can act. [*Scornfully.*] Act? Bah! Act? Pah! But he'll find out his mistake before long. Do you imagine that the public of an important suburb like Peckham are going to put up with Septimus Joneses, when others who are immeasurably his superiors—but no matter!

MILL. [*sympathetically*]. It's a great shame; I am sure they would much prefer to see you in the part—still, there's no doubt that Mr. Jones is extremely good-looking, and that always goes a long way.

ADOL. Good-looking! Jones! a pasty-faced bean-pole, with greasy curls and Chippendale legs! Upon my word, Milly, you certainly have the most extraordinary ideas of manly beauty.

MILL. [*slightly annoyed*]. Oh, have I! Well, at any rate I fell in love with you.

ADOL. [*slightly disconcerted*]. Eh! Oh! [*Recovers himself.*] But that I flatter myself was due to the fact that there were—ah—intellectual attractions that would well outweigh the barber's block beauty of a Septimus Jones, to say nothing of expression—charm.

MILL. But really, Dolly, Mr. Jones has a most pleasing expression. The Smithson girls rave about his smile.

ADOL. [*starts; then with loud cry of anguish*]. Ah! I knew it! Jones has cast his glamor over you. [*In accents of distress.*] Oh, Milly, Milly, has it come to this?

MILL. [*pleadingly*]. Dolly, believe me——

ADOL. [*waving her off*]. Oh, don't tell me. I've noticed with what an appearance of comfort you repose in his arms at rehearsal. You linger there as if you liked it.

MILL. Dolly, this is unjust. It musses me to keep bounding away.

ADOL. Then, confess—is it not a fact that Jones infuses a fervor into his love-making that is alike insulting and—and—inartistic? Why can't the man make love like a gentleman and not like a mere play-actor? [*Struts away in stagey fashion.*]

MILL. [*whimpering*]. Well, I'm sure I can't help it. I always hold myself stiff, all the time like this [*indicates her attitude*] and I've told him plainly that if he dares to kiss me on the night, even on the ear, I shall scream.

ADOL. [*angrily*]. And I shall—but no matter—let Jones beware! [*Walks up room, and then returns to her.*] And you openly, unblushingly admit that you have so far forgotten yourself as to discuss with this Jones creature such a supremely delicate subject as—ah—dalliance and caresses. Oh, it is horrible, horrible!

MILL. [*with rapidly rising temper*]. Who's horrible? Which? Well, upon my word, Dolly, if it comes to caresses you have no right to complain.

ADOL. [*with virtuous indignation*]. Millicent!

MILL. Oh, it's all very well to say "Millicent"; but what about the kiss in the first act you give that dreadful professional person, Miss Montmorency, who plays the adventuress? Didn't you promise me to cut it, after that first dreadful smack?

ADOL. And I loyally did my best. Did I not suggest that, to spare her feelings, we should omit it; and what was the result? She laughed, and replied that she hadn't the slightest objection to stage-embraces; and that, if I didn't mind a mouthful of grease-paint, I might kiss her as often as I pleased.

MILL. [*angrily*]. The bold, impudent creature! But it was your duty to insist that you didn't like the taste.

ADOL. How could I? If a lady who has a right—an artistic

right to such—ah—privilege, insists that I shall kiss her—and, [*complacently*] believe me, the circumstance is neither peculiar nor unprecedented—common politeness forbids me to refuse.

MILL. [*very angry*]. So, you talked it over at length, did you? Adolphus, this is an outrage!

ADOL. [*equally infuriated*]. Millicent, your conduct with Septimus Jones is worse, it is a prolonged atrocity.

MILL. [*walks up and down room in passion of anger*]. Adolphus, you—you have gone too far, I will submit to insult no longer. Withdraw your words instantly, or henceforth we are as strangers.

ADOL. [*wildly*]. I will withdraw not a syllable. On the contrary I will speak volumes, every one of which I am prepared to substantiate in a court of law. And I'm not acting now!

MILL. [*walks to and fro*]. Very well then. I have done with you. Farewell, forever! [*Sits.*] And I mean it.

ADOL. Be it so! [*Striding about room.*] And if you, who once loved such as I am, can stoop to a mere Jones, I will leave you to your Septimus. [*Sits. Short pause.*]

MILL. [*tearfully, without moving*]. Good-bye, Dolly!

ADOL. [*mournfully*]. Good-bye, Milly! [*Another slight pause, during which they steal glances at each other.*]

MILL. When—when I am gone, Dolly—for ever, you won't forget to tell Parker to see that your linen is well aired.

ADOL. No, no, I will be reckless—wear a damp Jaeger and die.

MILL. [*sobs*]. Oh, Dolly!

ADOL. [*expressing emotion by copious blowings of nose*]. Milly, when I am far away—and my bones are possibly bleaching on—on an a—arid desert——

MILL. [*with a cry of anguish*]. Oh! It would kill you to bleach.

ADOL. [*with tears in voice*]. Tell baby that although I shall never see his approaching tooth, yet when the time comes for him to cut it, a father's heart will throb in sympathy.

MILL. [*sobbing*]. I will, dear. I will; your kind thought will be such a comfort to him. [*Slight pause.*]

ADOL. [*starts up suddenly*]. Milly!

MILL. [*also jumps to her feet*]. Dolly!

ADOL. I can't!

MILL. Nor I!

ADOL. [*gesticulating with his play-book in his hand*]. Why should we sacrifice our happiness merely to enrich the contemporary drama and delight a Peckham public?

MILL [*with fervor*]. Why, indeed?

ADOL. [*holding his book as though about to tear it*]. Will you?

MILL. [*with decision*]. I will. [*They tear up their books and trample them beneath their feet.*]

ADOL. [*holding out his arms*]. Milly!

MILL. Dolly! [*Flies to him and they embrace fondly.*] Oh, Dolly, dear, let us go and see baby have his bath!

ADOL. [*with sigh of anticipatory delight*]. Ah! [*They leave room with arms entwined, and gazing lovingly into each other's eyes.*]

CURTAIN.

TELEPHONE COURTSHIP.

"Am dat you, Miss Lilywhite?"
"Ah reckon it am."
"Could yo' love me?"
"Ah reckon Ah could."
"Do yo' love me?"
"Ah reckon Ah do."
"Could yo' marry me?"
"Ah reckon Ah could."
"Will yo' marry me?"
"Ah reckon Ah will—who am dat callin'?"

MY OLD DUTCH.

ALBERT CHEVALIER.

I've got a pal, a reg'lar out an' outer,
She's a dear old gal,—
I'll tell yer all about 'er.
It's many years since fust we met,
'Er 'air was then as black as jet,
It's whiter now, but she don't fret,—
Not my old gal.

CHORUS:

We've been together now for forty years,
An' it don't seem a day too much,—
There ain't a lady living in the land,
As I'd swop for my dear old Dutch.

I calls 'er Sal, 'er proper name is Sai-rer,
An' yer may find a gal as you'd consider fairer,
She ain't a angel, she can start
A-jawin' till it makes yer smart,
She's just a woman—bless 'er heart,—
Is my old gal.

Sweet, fine old gal, for worlds I wouldn't lose 'er,
She's a dear good old gal, an' that's what made me choose 'er;
She's stuck to me through thick and thin,
When luck was out, when luck was in,
Ah! wot a wife to me she's been,
An' wot a pal!

I sees yer, Sal, yer pretty ribbons sportin';
Many years now, old gal, since them young days of courtin',
I ain't a coward, still I trust
When we've to part, as part we must,
That death may come and take me fust,—
To wait my pal.

FAST FRIENDS.

RE HENRY.

Text and Stage-Business Edited and Revised
By PAULINE PHELPS and MARION SHORT.

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CHARACTERS: LAURA LATIMER } both young married
MABEL HAMILTON } women.

SCENE: Prettily furnished sitting-room in MRS. LATIMER'S house. Desk and chair R. Open piano with music on rack L. Sofa C.

DISCOVERED: LAURA sitting at desk, pen in hand and writing-materials on desk in front of her.

LAURA. Let me see, what shall be the subject of my new poem? Love is old-fashioned. Babies are played out. Friendship! That can never grow stale; there can never be too much said in its praise. [*Dips pen in ink and begins to write.*] "Ode to Friendship," dedicated to my dearest friend, Mabel Hamilton. [*Gives disgusted exclamation.*] O dear, there's a blot on Mabel! [*Writing.*]

"Let the world scoff, the nobler sex deride
That feeling whose existence they've denied
Women's large souls—"

Oh, dear, that's so horribly suggestive of big feet. I must try again.

"Hail! holy Friendship! Goddess most divine,
If thou wilt deign thy votaries to test,
And in a lower sphere awhile to shine,
Thou'lt find a home in one true faithful breast."

MABEL [*without*]. Oh, at home to me, I know! [*Enters.*] My dear Laura! [*Rushes down to Laura, kisses her on one cheek, then on the other, then on mouth, closing with a rapturous embrace.*]

LAU. My sweetest Mabel! If I were not so delighted to see you, I should be annoyed at this interruption to my "Ode to Friendship," dedicated to you, dearest. But what detained you so long? [*They sit on sofa C. facing each other.*]

MAB. Well, to be candid, it was my husband. You know, Charlie does so hate to have me come to you. He almost flew in a passion, and said he would put a stop to our friendship.

LAU. Put a stop to it? As if it were in the power of "man, weak man, dressed in a little brief authority," to stop the communion of two kindred souls. Well, how did you make him listen to reason?

MAB. By making him listen to music. You know, you advised me to take to some particular study as a resource when things went wrong.

LAU. Yes, and as things invariably do go wrong, I suppose you find it of service?

MAB. Well, on this occasion it certainly was. I threw open the piano; the more Charlie talked [*makes brief pause and goes through pantomime of pounding piano keys*], the louder I played, till at last he left the room silenced, if not convinced. [LAURA *claps her hands loudly to applaud conduct of friend.*]

LAU. Capital! See what an effective weapon I put into your hands when I bade you study music. Oh! there's nothing like having a vocation. If dinner is late and Reginald scolds or lectures, I take refuge in my pen, and at once forget him. But I often think he doesn't know how very unconscious I am of his faultfinding. Now, with the piano there can be no mistake. I'm half sorry I didn't take to music instead of poetry.

MAB. Oh, but it's dreadfully hard work. What I suffer at the classical concerts no one knows, especially if there's nothing new in bonnets or dresses.

LAU. My dear Mabel, if you talk like that, I shall begin to think what my husband says of you is true—that you are idle, vain, and frivolous.

MAB. Not very polite of your husband, considering he doesn't know me. But, to tell the truth, Mr. Hamilton is quite as uncomplimentary to you, my love. If you only knew the things he says of you!

LAU. He can't say I'm ugly because he never saw me.

MAB. Oh, worse than that, a thousand times; he actually said you were a woman with ideas.

LAU. Just like a man.

MAB. What, to have ideas?

LAU. Oh, no! to sneer at a woman for having them. Well, I hope after this you'll practise that music from early morn until dewy eve and occasionally attack scales and arpeggios at midnight. Practise makes perfect, you know.

MAB. But Charlie does hate it so.

LAU. Of course, if he liked it I shouldn't advise you to do it.

MAB. But suppose he should cease to love me?

LAU. You little goose! The more independent we are of them, the more they care for us. It's only jealousy that makes them rail against our studies and against our love for each other. But let them rail and sneer, the firmer friends we will be. Ha! ha! it would take more than a couple of men to dissolve the bond that links our souls together.

MAB. Oh, yes; it's so nice to have a friend, particularly when one has a secret.

LAU. A secret! Oh, delightful! Come, let me hear all about it.

MAB. Well, you must know last night I was at a concert.

LAU. Yes, a good one?

MAB. Good?—oh, you mean the music. Well, I hardly know, but I sat next to one of the most charming men I have ever seen. He had the loveliest eyes, so dark and melancholy; and in the course of the conversation——

LAU. Conversation! then you knew him?

MAB. No, not exactly, but he lent me his program, and asked my opinion of one of the singers, and I don't know how it was, I'm sure, but we grew quite friendly.

LAU. Did your husband approve of this sudden intimacy?

MAB. Well, of course, he would have done so, only he wasn't there. [*Rises and walks over to piano, takes piece of music and crumples it nervously in her hands as she finishes speech.*] He said he had enough music at home without going out after it. So, seeing I was alone, this gentleman called my carriage, squeezed my hand tenderly as he passed me in—and—and—oh Laura, are you dreadfully shocked, because, if so, I am sorry I've confided in you.

LAU. My dear, ingenuous friend! I should be intensely, overwhelmingly shocked at this from you, but for one circumstance.

MAB. What's that? Your friendship for me?

LAU. No; that I had a precisely similar adventure. [*Rises and walks proudly across room to desk, takes fan from shelf and begins to wield it flippantly.*]

MAB. Oh, Laura! you so staid, so——

LAU. Yes, I know, my dear, but what could I do? I was at a literary lecture. Reginald would not accompany me, and I found myself near a young man who interested me strangely. His smile was a revelation. [*Casts up eyes and folds closed fan to bosom.*] Oh, Mabel! [*Crosses and stands by Mabel, her hand on her shoulder.*] He is so unhappy; his wife does not understand, does not appreciate him. Can you blame me that I listened to his confidence, that I sought to bind up his bruised and wounded spirit?

MAB. What a strange fatality! It seems we are both destined to console the unfortunate. [*Still seated on piano-stool, she reaches out both hands to her friend, who takes them sympathetically.*] My friend with the haunting eyes was also married, and has also been disappointed. But, Laura, there's something more. It was not my fault, indeed it wasn't. Don't blame me too

severely; but this morning's post brought me—I blush to confess it—brought me a letter. [*Produces letter from reticule.*]

LAU. So it did to me. [*Rushes over to desk and secures similar letter which she holds up to display to Mabel.*]

MAB. Ah! but mine, alas! was from my acquaintance of last night. [*Gives great, sentimental sigh.*]

LAU. So, alas! was mine. [*Gives similar sigh.*]

MAB. Mine was signed with an initial.

LAU. So was mine.

MAB. What a mysterious destiny attends us. I owe it to our friendship to let you read.

LAU. Between hearts such as ours there should be no concealment. [*Exchange letters; both scream.*] It's Reginald's caligraphy.

MAB. It's Charlie's handwriting.

LAU. I'd swear to those i's.

MAB. I'd stake my existence on the h's.

LAU. So, madam [*walks up to* MABEL *and shakes finger in her face*], it was my husband who paid you such devoted attention last evening.

MAB. Oh, you're right to be indignant. [*Shakes finger in* LAURA'S *face.*] I suppose you mean to ignore the flirtation you carried on with *my* husband.

LAU. You're too young and foolish to be trusted out alone.

MAB. Well, you're not. At your time of life you ought to know better how to behave yourself.

LAU. Of course, you must have coquetted and drawn him on, for Reginald is the most reserved of men. [*Sits on sofa, tapping foot agitatedly on floor.* MABEL *sits on other end of sofa and they turn their backs to each other, talking scornfully over their shoulders.*]

MAB. I should like to have heard you alluring poor Charlie, for he's as modest and retiring as a woman.

LAU. As *some* women, I've no doubt. Admired his eyes, did you? Oh, allow me to compliment you on your discrimination.

MAB. His smile was a revelation! It has been a revelation to me.

LAU. Been disappointed in his marriage, has he?

MAB. His wife does not understand him? [*Turns facing* LAURA, *and they glare at each other, their noses almost touching, and shaking their heads indignantly as they talk.*]

LAU. and MAB. [*both speaking at the same time*]. Let me ask you whose fault it is if such is the case?

LAU. Go on, madam; pretend to blame me so as to crush my just indignation. In some matters you could have been the teacher better than the pupil.

MAB. Oh, Charlie was right when he bade me have nothing to do with such a woman.

LAU. Why did no one warn me I was nourishing a viper in my bosom. [LAURA *starts up, comes down stage, and makes gestures of repulsion, as if banishing friendship forever.*] Friendship, thou art an illusion, a snare, a will-o'-the-wisp.

"What is Friendship, but a name,
A charm that lulls to sleep,
That deems itself secure from blame,
And leaves the wife to weep."

[*Tears "Ode to Friendship."* MABEL *goes to piano and begins to play any noisy popular melody.*] Madam [*goes up to* MABEL *as she plays, snatches hat from her head and waves it aloft on the word "mine"*], this house is mine.

MAB. Oh, I assure you, there is no danger of my forgetting that in future. [*Rises from stool, seizes pile of music and throws it violently on floor.*] I could not breathe beneath the same roof as the destroyer of my peace. [*Snatches hat from* LAURA'S *hands and puts it on.*]

LAU. Fool! fool! fool! [*Paces agitatedly up and down floor.*]

MAB. Are you addressing me, madam? [*Paces in similar manner up and down.*]

LAU. No, madam, but the wretched victim of your shame-

ful hypocrisy. Why did I ever suffer myself to be so deluded! Oh, Reginald! Oh, Mabel! [*Falls into chair and weeps.*]

MAB. That I should live to be abused by the woman I trusted in spite of all. Oh, Laura! Oh, Charlie! [*Falls into chair and weeps. Pause.*] Laura!

LAU. Madam.

MAB. [*with sudden change to commonplace manner*]. Oh, don't call me madam; it sounds so silly and melodramatic. Besides, I've an idea. I think we're a couple of idiots.

LAU. With regard to one of us, I must be allowed to remark——

MAB. Bosh! I mean I believe we've been the victims of a trick.

LAU. A trick!

MAB. Yes; do you imagine such coincidences as those of last night could happen by accident?

LAU. If you mean to insinuate that it was by arrangement—

MAB. Of course, it was. [*Rises and crosses to* LAURA *and sits on footstool by her knee.*] Not yours or mine, but those husbands of ours. I don't know Reginald and you don't know Charlie, because they always refused to make our acquaintance; but do you think they don't know us by sight well enough to carry out such a plot?

LAU. Wait a moment. Do let me think. Why, Mabel—

MAB. Well?

LAU. I do believe you're right—we're a couple of idiots. But what object could they have had?

MAB. Why, to make us quarrel, of course; to break off our intimacy.

LAU. Pshaw! How absurd! Why, Mabel, as if we were likely to quarrel.

MAB. Yes, my dear, but do you know, I think we were pretty near it at one time. I felt almost angry with you.

LAU. Well, I must own to having been a little put out myself. But what a scheme for them to concoct!

MAB. How shall we punish them, Laura?

LAU. Why, by being faster——

MAB. Oh, no. By heaping coals of fire on their heads. Laura, I mean to turn over a new leaf. I mean to be so good and docile, in future, and I won't play a note of music unless Charlie asks me.

LAU. Well, and I'll try to reform, too. I'll listen to Reginald's lectures without writing a word of poetry.

MAB. That's a good girl; and you won't say anything more about being fast? [*Rises to her feet.* LAURA *rises also.*]

LAU. Pshaw, my dear! I only meant we'd be, as we've ever been [*reaches out both hands to* MABEL, *who takes them*], *Fast Friends.*

CURTAIN.

FRENCHMAN ON "MACBETH."

Ah! your Mossieu' Shak-es-pier, he is gr-r-aa-nd—mysterieuse—soo-blime! You 'ave reads ze Macabess?—ze scene of Mossieu' Macabess viz ze Vitch—eh? Superb soo—blimitee! W'en he say to ze Vitch, "Ar-r-roynt ze, Vitch!" she go away; but what she say when she go away? She say she will do somesing dat 'aves got no naame! "Ah, ha!" she say, "I go, like ze r-r-aa-t vizout ze tail, but I'll do! I'll do!" W'at she do? Ah, ha—voila le graand mysterieuse Mossieu' Shak-es-pier. She not say what she do! By-by, Mossieu' Macabess, he fight wiz Mossieu' Macduffs. He see him come, clos' by; he say (proud empressement), "Come o-o-n, Mossieu' Macduffs, and damned be he who first say, 'Enoffs.'" Zen zey fi-i-ght moche. Ah, ha! voila! Mossieu' Macabess, vis his br-r-ight r-r-apier 'pink' him, vat you call, in his body. He 'ave gots mal d'estomae; he say "Enoffs!" 'cause he got enoffs—plaanty; and he expire r-right away, 'mediately, pretty quick! Ah, mes amis, Mossieu' Shak-es-pier is rising man in la belle France. He is gr-r-aand, soo-blime!

A HAPPY ENDING.

BERTHA MOORE.

Text and Stage-Business Edited and Revised
By PAULINE PHELPS and MARION SHORT.

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CHARACTERS: MRS. CARZON, a lady of about thirty-eight, good-looking, well-dressed, imperious in bearing, a dissatisfied expression on her face.

URSULA VERNON, a girl of eighteen, pretty, graceful, plainly but well-dressed.

SCENE: A cosy sitting-room; fire-place L., writing-table R., grandfather's clock at back between two windows, in which are lots of growing plants, easy chair by fire, cosy chairs scattered about, piano at back partly behind easy chair.

[MRS. CARZON *discovered writing at table after sealing a letter; she pauses and bites her pen.*]

MRS. CARZON. No, I can't stand it any longer. I am bored, bored to extinction by my own society. I can be brilliant enough in the society of others, but at home alone I'm a dull dog. I'm glad I determined to engage a young companion on whom to sharpen my wits, and to break the deadly monotony of my one-sided life [*taking up letter and reading it*]. I like her letter; straightforward, simple, and yet a touch of pride in it. The week's trial was a good idea. If she's ugly she'll go in less time. I never could stand anything unsightly about me [*looking at watch*]. It's about time she—[*knock*]. Come in.

[URSULA *enters.*]

URSULA. Excuse me for coming in unannounced, but your maid said you were expecting me.

MRS. C. [*who has risen*]. Harriet always saves herself and the stairs when she can. Won't you sit down? [*Crosses L. indicating chair center.*]

URS. Thanks. [*Seats herself, and* MRS. C. *takes chair by fire, rests her elbows on arms of chair, and joins her fingers together, scrutinizing her silently.* URSULA *becomes slightly embarrassed.*]

MRS. C. Yes, you'll do; at least, I think so. One or two questions first; how old are you?

URS. Eighteen last May.

MRS. C. You're not a prude, I hope.

URS. [*smiling*]. I think not. Though as I never met one I can't be sure.

MRS. C. Because I may as well tell you at once, I'm not really a widow. I quarreled with my husband and left him a year after we were married, and have never seen him since. So, if you have any scruples about living with me, say so at once, and go. [*Rises and folds her arms.*]

URS. [*pleasantly*]. I don't think your private affairs need be any concern of mine. You required a cheerful companion, your letter stated. I'm cheerful and will try to be companionable [*smiling*].

MRS. C. That's right. If you turn out as good as your word. By the bye, why do you have to work for your living?

URS. [*slightly confused*]. Oh, my father had to go out to Australia about some business affairs, and so during his absence I thought I—I—would try to earn a little money.

MRS. C. [*sharply*]. Of course, you know I'm a very rich woman. You have no idea of getting yourself into my good graces and being left my fortune, I suppose, because that won't pan out, I assure you.

URS. [*rising indignantly*]. I came here to be your companion, Mrs. Carzon, not to be insulted.

MRS. C. [*smiling*]. Bravo, I like your spirit, excellent,—that might have been myself at your age. You remind me of myself at your age somehow. Sit down, my dear.

URS. You suggested, Mrs. Carzon, that I should come to you for a week's trial. I am quite prepared to fall in with your suggestion and have brought a small box with me. With your permission I will go to my room and unpack.

MRS. C. [*rising*]. Certainly, but don't trouble to unpack, Harriet will do that for you. Let me show you your room [*walking to door and opening it*]. That is your room opposite, and here's Harriet. [*To* HARRIET.] Harriet, see that Miss Vernon has all she wants, and unpack her things. [URSULA *goes out and* MRS. CARZON *returns and sits by fire.*] I like her, decidedly I like her, and she is pretty; but I shall try her a bit to see if she is genuine metal all through, or only veneer. [*Leans forward, resting chin in hands and staring into fire dreamily.*] I wonder if my daughter has grown up anything like this girl! What a fool I have been to throw away my happiness as I did. . . . Poor old Harry, I was fond of him once. . . . "Once!" Great Heavens! I cannot even be honest with myself [*moves*]. "Once," why, I am longing for him now; I love him after all these years. I would give my——

[*Enter* URSULA, *hat off, work-bag in hand.*]

URS. How cosy this room looks! Makes me feel as if I'd like to belong here.

MRS. C. Come to the fire, you must be cold.

URS. Thanks, may I sit on the rug? [*Sitting down and holding out hands to blaze.*] I always love "squatting." I think there must be something of the toad in me.

MRS. C. [*grimly*]. A pretty girl knows she looks well with the firelight playing on her hair and her dainty fingers stretched out to the blaze; quite right, always make the best of yourself. And forget there's anyone else in the world. That's the way to be happy.

URS. [*drawing back her hands hastily*]. Oh! why do you say such things? I don't believe you mean them.

MRS. C. Ah! that depends. Now, tell me what you can do. What are your accomplishments?

URS. [*smiling*]. I can—er—read aloud.

MRS. C. Thank you, my eyesight is still fairly good, and I never could stand the monotonous drone of any one person's voice. That's one reason why I never go to church. If it were to be arranged that the prayers were read by the congregation turn and turn about, I might venture. What else can you do?

URS. Fancy-work [*shows her work*], but very badly. I always think it such a waste of time, and would so much rather be playing tennis or golf.

MRS. C. Indeed, but as you can't play golf in my drawing-room and I loathe the game, how do you propose to be of use to me? To entertain me?

URS. Well, I'm sort of company to have around, and I can write your letters.

MRS. C. You will have to improve your handwriting first; there were three words in your letter I could not read.

URS. [*rises and stands center, laughing*]. Well, I'll tell you what I'll do—I'll write six copies every day, proverbs and things, something to improve my mind as well as my handwriting, things like this, you know—

"Hypocrisy is the mother of invention."
"A stitch in nine saves time."
"Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings you corrupt good manners."

And by the time I've learned to write I'll know a whole book of proverbs to recite to you, and you'll find you can't live without me [*laughs*].

MRS. C. [*laughing in spite of herself*]. Well, if you can do nothing else, you can talk nonsense, and that is something on a dull day. [*With return to unpleasant manner.*] But that is not saying you'll fill the bill. I don't believe in paying for anything

but my money's worth, even though I have no lack of money. [*Impatiently.*] Come, dance, play, sing. Prove your worth. I am bored to death with living and I want to be distracted. I want to laugh, laugh, laugh! it is the only way to forget. Make me laugh, and I'll begin to consider you valuable.

URS. [*slowly and sympathetically*]. But don't you think you would be happier—to cry a little?

MRS. C. [*staring at her in amazement*]. What do you mean? I want no sentimental suggestions, if you please. My heart has hardened to all the world and I never cry. No, give me laughter every time—sparkling, heartless, cruel laughter!

URS. You're not impressing me a bit. That's every whit put on.

MRS. C. [*rising indignantly*]. How dare you speak to me like that?. You—a hired companion.

URS. [*sweetly and gently*]. It is only that I want to help you—though not to forget.

MRS. C. [*determinedly*]. I must—I *will* forget.

URS. No, for your real wish, your only wish, your one pleasure is—to remember. I've discovered that about you already; so, as your companion, it is my duty, you see, to help you remember those days gone by.

MRS. C. [*sarcastically*]. And what leads you to imagine you have been so brilliant as to penetrate to my inmost feelings? How do you know that you aren't altogether mistaken about me?

URS. You said you were very like me at my age. Well, I can feel a sort of inner likeness now that makes me think I understand you. Yes, I'll sing for you and perhaps begin in that way to help you—

MRS. C. [*harshly*]. To forget?

URS. [*gently*]. No, to remember. [*She walks to piano and puts down work-bag, then begins to play a little. The light has faded and room is now lighted only by fire which plays on*

her face. URSULA *begins to sing very sympathetically refrain of song "Some Day."*]*

REFRAIN.

"Some day, some day, some day I shall meet you,
Love, I know not when or how;
Love, I know not when or how;
Only this, only this, this, that once you loved me,
Only this, I love you now,
I love you now, I love you now."

[MRS. C. *starts as she begins, then turns and watches her intently, visibly agitated, and at end of verse speaks in choked voice.*]

MRS. C. [URSULA *plays softly*]. Where—where did you learn that song?

URS. [*stopping and turning to her*]. Oh, my father taught it to me; it is a great favorite of his.

MRS. C. [*intensely, half to herself, carried away by flood of recollection*]. It was my husband's favorite song years ago. [*She sits looking straight ahead of her and* URSULA *plays melody of song softly while she talks.*] After all these years to hear it again! [*She seems to forget* URSULA'S *very presence.*] I remember as if it were yesterday that last time I heard it. It was the night I went away from home, from him, from my baby girl, never to return. The snow was falling outside, and I shivered and almost turned back as I opened the door—back into the warmth and brightness of my husband's heart and home. He was in his room singing—singing that very song, as I passed, and I think if he had kept on a moment longer I must have forgotten my mad jealousy, my discontent, and rushed back sobbing into his arms. But some one called to him—he suddenly stopped singing—my good angel left me and my bad one came instead and led me out into the storm, out into these long dreary years of loneliness and remorse. Ah, stop playing that melody! [*Rises, wringing her hands.*] My husband, my baby! I cannot bear it! [*Rushes sobbing from room.*]

---

* "Some Day" (either for high voice in F, or medium voice in Eb.) sent for 35c.

URS. [*who has been watching her intently all the time, rises as she leaves and comes to front of stage with clasped hands, work-bag on her arm*]. Oh! Mother, mother, have I so soon touched your heart? Then, of course, you have loved him all the time,—you love him still, and it is only pride that has kept you from going back to him years ago. Under all your assumed hard manner your heart is bursting with love for him, and I—I must win your love, too, for myself, for I love you already. Now, something cheerful to bring her back. [*Plays on—sings lively music.*]

[*Enter* MRS. CARZON, *who turns up light as she enters.*]

MRS. C. Well, I'm back again, and please don't think I am a sentimental foolish woman, for such is not the case. Only—music sometimes has a curious effect on me, that's all.

URS. [*rising and coming behind her chair and timidly putting one hand on her arm*]. May I tell you what I do think about you?

MRS C. [*turning round, hard look on face, which softens as she sees* URSULA'S *expression*]. Well?

URS. [*dreamily*]. I think you're a very sweet woman, who has let the deceitfulness of riches gradually sap your sweetness away. A woman who, if surrounded by those she loved, would have been one of God's best handiworks, but who has shut herself in herself, closing her heart to affection, yet longing, aching for it all the while; a woman for whom the touch of a child's hand would open all the pent-up flood-gates of feeling and bring the sunshine streaming into a life clouded by pride and unspoken remorse.

MRS. C. [*who has been watching her intently, puts out her hand as if to draw her to her, and then pulls back and assumes her hard, defiant look*]. Oh! that's what you think, is it? I must say you are a curious girl and have curious ideas.

URS. [*disappointed and wistful*]. Please forgive me. I know I have no right to speak to you in that way; but, somehow, I could not help myself. I have got into the way of always speaking my thoughts. Father has encouraged me to do so.

[*Sadly.*] You see, I have had no mother to advise me. [*Throwing herself on her knees by* MRS. C.'s *side and taking her hand.*] Do you know, I feel as if I had known you all my life, and that you have satisfied a want that has always been throbbing in my heart? [*Kissing her hand.*] Will you let me love you?

MRS. C. [*leans forward as if to kiss her, then draws back—harshly*]. Yes, if you like to do so. I can't help it, can I? Besides, I have an idea you're only pretending. [URSULA, *disappointed, sighs and drops back from chair.* MRS. C. *continues bitterly.*] There's not much in me to love, child; as you say, all the sweetness in me has gone and left only the bitter husk. If I could have my time over again, perhaps I should act differently, perhaps not!

URS. [*eagerly*]. You would, I know you would. [*Rises.*] Would you mind if I turned down the light? I want to tell you a story, and I can do it better in the dark. [URSULA *stands behind chair, and, unfelt, kisses* MRS. CARZON'S *hair.*]

MRS. C. I don't mind. [URSULA *turns out lights.*] A story! What a queer child you are. [*Half to herself.*] But there is something winsome about you after all.

URS. [*sitting on rug again at* MRS. CARZON'S *feet*]. Do you like stories to have a sad or a happy ending?

MRS. C. Oh! well—happy, I suppose.

URS. So do I, so do I! But there is some sadness in this story, but the end——

MRS. C. Well, well, get on with your story.

URS. [*putting hands round knees and staring at audience*]. Once upon a time there was a beautiful princess who lived in the loveliest castle and had more money than she knew what to do with. Suitors came from far and near for her hand, but she would have none of them; she said she must be loved for herself alone and not for her riches and power. One day, when walking in the woods, she got her foot caught in a trap. She was in great pain and could not unfasten it. Suddenly a young knight appeared and released her. He looked at her beautiful face and

his heart was hers. Day after day they met and he never knew who she was. At last the princess felt she was loved for herself alone, then she told him who she was and that she too loved him. So they were married and for a time were very happy; but unfortunately this beautiful princess had some evil counselors who whispered to her that her husband had only married her for her money and not for herself, and that he really cared for someone else. This made her very angry; she would not listen to what he said, she believed her evil counselors, and one day in a fit of jealousy she told him her suspicions. He was proud, and said if she believed that he only cared for her because of her riches, he would go away and never come back till he was as rich as she was, and so——

MRS. C. [*who has gradually got more and more excited*]. Child—child, what is this you are telling me? Who told you? Who are you, who are you?

URS. [*who has emptied her work-bag and taken out a little baby's sock, takes no notice of the interruption but goes on*]. So he went away to a far country and tried to make his fortune. It took him a long time, years and years; but he had patience and he was not all alone, he had his baby girl, while she—poor princess—only had one of the baby's socks which she had kicked off in her cradle before she went away, the mate to this. [URSULA *turns and places sock on* MRS. CARZON'S *knee, who snatches it up and kisses it passionately, taking a similar one from bosom of her dress, fastened on to a chain with a miniature.*]

MRS. C. My baby girl, my own!

URS. [*rising to her knees and drawing the weeping woman to her arms and kissing her*]. Mother darling, mother, I have found you at last and the story has a happy ending, for father is coming to-morrow,—coming home to you.

MRS. C. Thank God! Thank God!

[*Stands with arms about* URSULA.]

CURTAIN.

THE TWINS.

WILBUR D. NESBIT.

We're twins—an' my name's *Lucy* Brown
An' her name's *Lulu;* I'm called "Lou,"
An' ever'body in 'is town
'Ey call my sister 'at name, too.
An' folks, 'ey come to see us here,
An' we ist have th' mostes' fun
'Cause ever'body say: "Oh, dear!
W'y, *'is* one is th' *nuther* one!"

My papa sometimes look at *me,*
An' say, "Well, Lulu, how you grow!"
An' nen I laugh, an' nen, w'y, he
Say goodness *sakes!* he'll never know
Which one is *which.* An' nen I say
No one can tell us twins apart
'Cause we're together anyway.
An' nen he holler, "Bless your heart!"

My mamma never gets us mixed;
She always knows my twin fum me.
An' papa say she's got us fixed
Our clo'es, or hair, so's she can see.
But mamma hugs us bofe up tight
An' kisses us, an' pats our curls,
An' says a muvver's *always* wite
An' always knows her preshus girls.

But nuther folks 'ey ist can't tell—
An' oncet when Lulu clumb a tree
An' couldn't hold, w'y, when she fell
Th' doctor thought 'at she was *me.*
Nen we all laugh, an' he ist say
It's all in how th' notions strike,
'At bofe o' us looks ist one way,
But 'at I look th' most *alike!*

Two Jolly Girl Bachelors.

EDWARD MARTIN SEYMOUR.

Text and Stage-Business Edited and Revised
By PAULINE PHELPS and MARION SHORT.

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CHARACTERS: SYBIL HEATHCOTE.
JULIA MAINWARING.

SCENE: The cosily-furnished parlor of a small flat. Table C. with chairs either side of it. Down R. an arm-chair. Down L. a sofa. Chairs, bric-a-brac, pots of flowers and other furnishings ad lib.

DISCOVERED: SYBIL, asleep in arm chair R. JULIA, asleep on sofa L. They wear becoming morning-gowns. Door-bell rings repeatedly. At final peal, which is heard by neither SYBIL nor JULIA, letters are thrust under door, presumably by postman.

SYBIL [*sitting up languidly and rubbing her eyes*]. Was that the bell?

JULIA [*rousing up also*]. I thought I heard something.

SYB. [*smiling and yawning*]. I do believe you were fast asleep too.

JU. It must have been the postman. Yes, there are several letters under the door. [*Starts toward door.*]

SYB. Don't pick them up yet. [JULIA *turns back.*] We don't want the outside world to break in on us when we've hardly

been settled an hour in our haven of privacy—this blessed little flat!

JU. [*hugging* SYBIL *enthusiastically*]. The two jolliest girl bachelors in the world! You are right. We can't be bothered with letters quite yet. [*They sit either side of table, resting elbows as if for good comfortable chat.*]

SYB. It is so comforting to know, Ju, that at last our plan and purpose of life is settled and made perfect, and all through the inspiration of that noble martyr to woman's cause, that hater of *man*kind,—

JU. That brave wearer of the Twentieth Century Divided Skirt—

SYB. [*with gesture of placing Mrs. Saltwire on a pedestal*]. Mrs. Harriet Annabel Saltwire!

JU. Through the discords of marriage [*gesture as if warding off discords*] she perceived the harmony of the single life [*clasps hands and raises eyes in ecstasy*]; the single life has become her religion.

SYB. [*hesitatingly*]. But isn't marriage a religion also, Ju?

JU. [*with a superior air*]. No, it is a heresy, an unpardonable heresy. [SYBIL *looks at her with questioning eyes, and she continues in explanation.*] The difference between *Religion* and Heresy is easily explained, my dear. Religion is that form of belief which we ourselves subscribe to. *Heresy* is the fallacy adopted by those who differ from us. [*Airily.*] Quite simple, you see.

SYB. [*adopting the argument and shrugging shoulders*]. Ridiculously so! [*Beaming admiration on her friend, as she runs up to her.*] Ju, you are frightfully clever! Councils and convocations, inquisitions and impositions, after centuries of quarreling, burning and fighting, have failed to settle a question which you have answered *right off* the reel in a dozen words. [*Enthusiastically.*] Ju, I can see a glorious future before *you.*

JU. [*sitting R. of table as she speaks with a kind of proud*

humility]. You see, dear, these foolish men never asked a woman to help them out of their difficulty.

SYB. Pig-headed masses of arrogance and conceit! [*Changing her tone and sitting L. of table.*] And now, dear, having forsworn matrimony, having refused absolutely to waste our talents—our intellects—

JU. [*chiming in and taking up the tale*]. Our opportunities, our aspirations, our ambitions—

SYB. [*finishing in her own light-hearted way*]. Our entire sweetness on the desert air of man.

JU. [*breaking in severely*]. Don't be frivolous, Sybil. [*Again referring to subject of immediate interest.*] Having refused to sacrifice ourselves to the caprices of so unobservant, so unappreciative, so unimaginative a creature, we are now at liberty to pursue our inclinations and our professions—the healing of the sick through the concords of music. For instance, the cure of paralysis through sharps, and the cure of rheumatism through flats.

SYB. And which Philip and Gregory described as subjecting vile bodies to villainous experiments, and turning melody into madness.

JU. [*scarcely hearing* SYBIL'S *speech and continuing her argument*]. Without fear of being disturbed by the frivolities of love-making, or anxieties as to our future in a state of life [*scornfully*] which we have repudiated as unworthy of intelligent and independent human beings [*last words in "platform" style*].

SYB. [*starting up and speaking with enthusiasm*]. Oh, Ju, you remind me of Mrs. Saltwire when she gave that lecture on "Man's Proper Place in the Universe," at the Excelsior.

JU. [*with studiously affected indifference to* SYBIL'S *appreciation, speaking parenthetically*]. Mrs. Saltwire was very sound on the question, I remember.

SYB. Oh, I can hear her every word, as if she were before me. I can repeat her inspired utterances and never lose an in-

flection! [*Rising and coming down L. as she assumes Mrs. Saltwire's best "platform" manner when giving the lecture in question.*] "Man's Proper Place in the Universe, his uses in the scheme of creation is purely secondary and utilitarian. He is by nature the carrier, the sweeper and the scavenger, and his proper place on the social and intellectual plane is that of an inferior to be tolerated, but by no means to be treated as an equal, much less to be regarded with sentiments of respect and affection." [*Dropping "platform" style and speaking with involuntary impulse.*] Oh, it was grand to hear her!

JU. [*who has been sitting with her eyes fixed on* SYBIL, *now rises impulsively, as though fired with the recital of Mrs. Saltwire's arguments*]. And you remember her discourse on "Man's Proper Attitude in Art?" [*in her turn coming down and adopting the Saltwire manner*]: "Man's Proper Attitude in Art is both subservient and subordinate! He is a proper subject for study, but an *im*proper object for association with that which is by nature mentally, morally and physically perfect. Together with those things which pertain to the lower [*with a downward sweep of her hand*] and animal creation, he may exhibit and be exhibited, but with that second and finest effort of creative power, namely WOMAN [*making gesture toward herself as an example, a gesture which* SYBIL *involuntarily imitates*], he must *not* be brought into contact."

SYB. [*in an excess of admiration of Mrs. Saltwire's argument*]. And to think that Gregory described her as an "old mud-raker."

JU. [*chiming in*]. And that Philip actually stigmatized her as a "diseased imagination."

SYB. [*carrying on the tale of their lovers' iniquities*]. And both compared the Excelsior to a depository for the antique, and a refuge for destitute and disappointed old maids, [*scornfully*] simply because we declined to introduce them to the social afternoons. Heighho—what a lot of time we wasted in frivolous pursuits before we became members of the Excelsior.

JU. [*seated*]. Do not let us dwell upon the past, the unreflecting past, when we were as the blind seeking for light, when [*speaking retrospectively and in softer tone*] Gregory used to monopolize almost every hour of a life which will henceforward be devoted to higher things, when he used to spend his days in inventing ridiculous terms of so-called endearment, and his evenings [*with slightly hysterical laugh, as she makes gesture toward herself*] in applying them to *me!*

SYB. [*breaking in a little mischievously*]. When he used to call you his "pigeon," his "dove," his "humming-bird!" When you are very far indeed from resembling a bird, my love.

JU. [*flaring up*]. Perhaps you are not a judge of birds, my dear. [*Spitefully.*] Your specialty has always been cats, I believe. I've even heard your enemies remark that you resembled one. Still, I must confess that poor Gregory was very sentimental and very foolish where I was concerned.

SYB. And so was my poor Phil. How he used to cram me with sweets, smother me with flowers, and inundate me with letters!

JU. [*recovering her spirit and speaking with scornful impatience*]. And suffocated you with what Mrs. Saltwire very aptly describes as degrading expressions of a debased and debasing passion.

SYB. [*loftily and indignantly*]. Excuse me, but Philip's love was pure as snow, there was nothing degrading or debasing about it. But, I must confess, my sweetest, that there was entirely too much of it. It inundated me like an avalanche. And to think that but seven short days ago we were on the verge of becoming the wives of—

JU. [*taking up the sentence as she seats herself on edge of table R.*]. These two unregenerate specimens of humanity. Instead of spending our days in administering to the graces and necessities of life, and our evenings in congenial society at the Excelsior, in all probability we should each have become mere domestic machines, doomed to manage a household.

SYB. [*jumping up on table and sitting beside* JULIA *as she breaks in*]. And a husband!

JU. From what a fate have we been spared!

SYB. I realize it, yet somehow in thinking it all over I feel pensive. [*Sighs.*]

JU. Now, that you mention it, Syb, so do I. [*Sighs.*] But we must remember that dear Mrs. Saltwire told us to repeat her name whenever we felt weak and womanly, and in so doing our grand resolutions would be renewed. And, perhaps, when we get to wearing those mannish boots and those new divided skirts she advocates—

SYB. As badges of our bachelor independence—

JU. [*relapsing into sadness again*]. I wonder if Gregory feels very lonely!

SYB. [*sighing heavily*]. Poor foolish old Philip! [*They look at each other, then simultaneously spring to their feet and begin to pace floor, making emphatic gestures with upraised fists at each mention of Mrs. Saltwire's name.*]

JU. and SYB. [*simultaneously*]. Harriet Annabel Saltwire, Saltwire, Saltwire, Saltwire. [*They continue repeating name until apparently out of breath.*]

SYB. [*sinking into chair*]. I'm all right now.

JU. [*throwing herself on sofa*]. So am I.

SYB. [*still in recumbent attitude*]. If you'll believe me, Ju, when Phil was a curate, before he had the good luck to obtain his present position, he had enough shoes, socks, slippers, and four-in-hands, to stock a shop. For if you had ever been engaged to a curate, you would know that by a polite fiction, invented by the combined congregations of old maids, his clothes are supposed to be in constant need of temporary repair, consequently they wear their fingers to the bone in knitting [*action*] or embroidering receptacles for needles, [*counting on fingers*] cottons, buttons, and scissors [*hysterically sarcastic*] supposed to be necessary companions to these poor tattered gentlemen.

JU. With a view to—?

SYB. [*nodding and taking up* JULIA'S *speech*]. To being asked to share the board and lodging of the unfortunate curates.

JU. [*indignantly*]. Unfortunate, indeed! [*Referring to the women.*] The mean creatures! I wonder they are not ashamed to live! [*Getting closer to* SYBIL *and speaking somewhat hysterically.*] And lawyers have their trials, too, I can tell you, Syb. When Greg was counsel to that Wilson girl in her breach-of-promise case, she made eyes as big [*stretching her hands*] as saucers at him all the while he was pleading on her behalf—[*more excitedly*] and as for the women who want to get divorced from their husbands—why they positively devour him!

SYB. [*looking very intently at* JULIA *for a moment then suddenly bounding off table and violently exclaiming*]. Saltwire! Saltwire! Saltwire!

JU. [*for a moment looks at her friend in alarm, then, as if appearing suddenly to remember, she too bounds off the table, exclaiming hysterically*]. Saltwire! Saltwire! Saltwire!

[*R. and L.*]

[*Both girls keep up the exclamation or invocation—with rapidly increasing utterance until out of breath they each sink on chairs R. and L., with a faint and last effort ejaculating.*]

JU. and SYB. Saltwire!

[*Each girl then wipes her brow or otherwise makes attempts at composure, afterward drawing a deep sigh of relief.* JULIA *speaks first.*]

JU. I feel stronger now. Isn't it wonderful?

SYB. [*nodding*]. To think there should be so much in the mere mention of a name! When dear Mrs. Saltwire told us to repeat her name I never dreamed it would have such power.

[*Both girls in nervous irritation and unrest now make one or two strides about room. Suddenly* SYBIL *stops short at table C. and brings clenched fist down on table with emphatic bang.*]

JU. [*starting forward and again looking anxiously at* SYBIL]. You don't feel as if you must repeat—?

SYB. Ju, it has just dawned upon me that this wretched bachelor business is neither more nor less than paying a compli-

ment to Man. Why, [*laughing hysterically*] the very name is a contemptible misnomer. How can a woman be a bachelor, and why should she wish to affect the style and quality of that which she abhors and despises? [*With increased emphasis,*] As women of advanced ideas, I ask you *why* we should thus imitate a creature which is beneath contempt? I shall submit the question to Mrs. Saltwire.

[*Girls are now on opposite sides R. and L. of table,* SYBIL *looking scornful and defiant.*]

JU. You are right, Sybil. [*With scornful wave of hand.*] From this moment I renounce a title and qualification which has brought me neither profit nor pleasure. And I refuse to don those horrid Twentieth-Century Divided Skirts even if Harriet Annabel Saltwire did suggest them. I intend sending instead an order at once to Madame Frou Frou for dozens and dozens of flouncy, frilly, foamy, frothy—[*lifts skirts slightly, disclosing ruffle of petticoat*].

SYB. [*same business*]. Snowy, silly, swishy skirts. [*Dances across room.*] So do I!

[*Both girls stop dancing and fall back on perceiving letters lying beneath door.*]

SYB. [*clutching at letter*]. A letter from Phil!

JU. [*ditto*]. A letter from Greg!

[*Both girls hold letters with outstretched hands, looking at them defiantly, then letting their arms fall to their sides, they each exclaim with half defiant, half exhausted accent.*]

JU. and SYB. Saltwire!

[*Both girls now come right down C. and Julia uttering a forced sigh of relief, meanwhile she half hysterically clutches at her throat, exclaiming.*]

JU. Ah! I feel strong, supernaturally strong!

SYB. [*with hysterical gulp*]. So do I—now.

JU. [*sinking into seat and speaking with spasmodic heroism*]. Then let us open them. [SYBIL, *seated.*]

[*Both girls avert their heads from mutual observation, meanwhile they open letters. After reading the first sentence or two,*

they each surreptitiously endeavor to fortify themselves by repeating in spasmodic gasps, and under their breaths, with occasional hysterical heightening of tone.]

JU. and SYB. Saltwire, Saltwire, Saltwire.

[*Both girls also half turn their heads in order to see if their actions are observed. Occasionally they catch each other's eyes, then they immediately turn away and address themselves with increased ardor to repetition of the magic name, but gradually adopt diminuendo. At last* SYBIL *edges her chair half round and ejaculates impulsively.*]

SYB. He says he can't live without me.

JU. [*also edging her chair round and quoting from letter*]. And Greg says he hasn't had a square meal for five days!

SYB. [*also quoting as she nearly faces* JULIA]. And he's so kind, poor fellow [*tearfully*]. He says I may give all my mind to music so long as I save my heart for him.

JU. [*ditto*]. And he promises to let me prescribe sharps and flats for the whole parish so long as I exhibit compassion to him.

[*Both go on reading for a few seconds; then* SYBIL *exclaims in distress.*]

SYB. Oh, he has an awful cough!

JU. [*quoting from letter, as she ejaculates*]. He's consumed with fever, and can't stop drinking from morn till night. [*Starts up.*] Oh, suppose it should fly to his brain!

SYB. [*starting up in her turn, and speaking in horrified tones*]. What, the drink?

JU. [*irritably*]. No, no. The fever.

[*Both are now down C.*]

[SYBIL *turns away with a moan and covers her eyes.* JULIA *remains standing for a moment, then appearing to come to a sudden resolution, she turns to* SYBIL *appealingly.*]

JU. Let's say it, Syb. [*Goes up to* SYBIL *and taking her hand drags her C.* SYBIL *breaks down, and throwing her head on* JULIA'S *shoulder exclaims tearfully.*]

SYB. Oh, Ju, I can't say it any more!

JU. [*raising her head, her face expressing expectant delight*]. Say what?

SYB. The name.

JU. What name, dear?

SYB. That horrid old woman's.

JU. [*embracing* SYBIL, *and hugging her hysterically*]. No more can I, Syb—the wicked old thing!

SYB. [*wiping her eyes*]. Trying to turn me against Phil.

JU. And making me behave so cruelly to dear old Greg. I can say it now. *Down* with Saltwire!

SYB. And nearly driving poor dear Phil into a galloping consumption. Saltwire, I renounce you!

JU. [*starting forward and assuming heroic and defiant attitude*]. But, thank Heaven, she hasn't succeeded! [*Turning to* SYBIL.] No, Syb, dear, like true-hearted women, we know how to appreciate the faithful and manly hearts which are offered to us, and I think—

SYB. [*breaking in with coy smile*]. I know what *I* think.

JU. What, dear?

SYB. [*slyly, as she places one arm affectionately round* JULIA'S *neck*]. That Philip and Gregory will very soon make two happy little wives out of Two Jolly Girl-Bachelors.

[*Both embrace rapturously.*]

CURTAIN.

GRANDMAMMA WILL SETTLE.

"How much is that silk a yard, sir?" a blushing maiden asked of a gay and dashing salesman who admiring glances cast.

"Only a kiss," he murmured with an audacious air as he unfolded the fabric before the maiden fair.

"Then I'll take ten yards, if you please, sir."

The young man's heart stood still. But the cruel maiden added: "And grandmamma will settle the bill!"

A SHOW OF HANDS.

W. R. WALKES.

Text and Stage-Business Edited and Revised
By PAULINE PHELPS and MARION SHORT.

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CHARACTERS: EDWARD.
ANGELA.

SCENE: Neatly furnished sitting-room. Table C., containing books and photograph album. Sofa R. Arm-chair L. Door R.

DISCOVERED: ANGELA, *kneeling at door R. listening at keyhole.*

ANGELA. He's coming. It's all over. Oh, how my heart beats! [*Sits back on feet awaiting* EDWARD's *entrance.* EDWARD *enters agitatedly; looks about for* ANGELA, *then turns back toward door and sees her.*]

EDWARD. Praying?

ANGELA. Praying and listening both. I couldn't hear a word, so I'm waiting for you to tell me whether my prayers were answered or not. [*Rises and approaches* EDWARD, *who looks moodily at floor.*] Edward, speak! Don't keep me in suspense. Can't you see how dreadfully anxious I am?

EDW It's all *up* with *us;* he declines absolutely.

ANG. Declines! Oh, no, Edward, it can't be true! There's some mistake; you have misunderstood him.

EDW. Impossible! His final words were, "Never will I consent to your marrying my daughter! Never! Rather than that she should become your wife, I would witness unmoved her elopement in a butcher's cart with the man who comes for orders."

ANG. [*distressed*]. Oh, dear! oh, dear! What can have put papa so much against you? Because you and I talked it all over and agreed you were to agree with him in politics and religion, although we both agreed that you really disagreed and—

EDWARD [*interrupting her with despairing gesture*]. Agreeing didn't help matters at all.

ANG. And did you tell him how well you are getting along in the world for such a young man?

EDW. Oh, yes, as you suggested, I didn't hesitate to blow my own horn so loud I almost deafened myself.

ANG. Did you mention that you had a thousand a year?

EDW. Yes, and I'm afraid I made it fifteen hundred.

ANG. And that your elder brother was very delicate?

EDW. Yes, and I rather think I led him to believe that the poor old boy was gasping his last. Heaven forgive me!

ANG. Oh, never mind, it's only diplomacy. And did you say that your portrait had appeared in two evening papers?

EDW. Well, no, I didn't mention that.

ANG. [*pouting*]. There! I knew you'd forget the portrait.

EDW. Of course, it's fame, but I thought I'd better not say anything about it. You know it appeared in an article headed "A Fool and His—"

ANG. [*interrupting*]. Oh, yes, of course; but did you tell him how clever you are—that a letter of yours has appeared in the New York *Sun*, and that you can do heaps of tricks with cards?

EDW. Yes, yes; I said everything to my credit I could think of; and, more important than all, I told him how dearly I loved my darling little Angy. [*Placing arm around her waist.*]

ANG. [*removing his arm*]. Ah, papa wouldn't be interested in that. He calls love the "Attraction of the Sexes," with a capital A and a capital S, and makes theories about it. He's a philosopher, you know [*rather bitterly*].

EDW. He is, worse luck. I might as well say good-bye to you.

ANG. What do you mean?

EDW. Well, it's philosophy, or something like it, that has so completely done for us.

ANG. Ah, I might have expected it. Papa's fads again; but go on, tell me all about it.

EDW. Well, after I had blushed through my catalogue of virtues, and was anxiously awaiting his decision, your father exclaimed quite suddenly, "Show me your hand." I put it out—so. "Thumbs up," said he, "Wiggle waggle," said I. "I am not conducting a game, you ninny," said he, "I'm conducting an investigation. Extend your hand thumb up." He glanced at it for a moment, then smacked his forehead violently and groaned. I was naturally rather alarmed at this, and inquired if he were ill; his reply was, "Fetch me, from the third bookshelf yonder, volume 44 of 'Pettigrew's Palmistry for Beginners.'"

ANG. Palmistry! Ah, to be sure! It's his latest madness!

EDW. I brought the book. He said, "Open at page 692." I did so. "Turn to Diagram No. 35," he continued, "and tell me what you think of the thumb there depicted." Well, I couldn't for the life of me make out what he was driving at, so I smiled feebly and said it was very pretty. "No, sir," he thundered out, "it is not pretty, it is the thumb of avarice and cruelty, and let me tell you, sir, it is an exact representation of your own. Be gone! Good evening!"

ANG. Oh, Edward! But you aren't avaricious and cruel, are you?

EDW. I don't know; I suppose I must be, it's in a book, I've seen it in print. Oh! [*sighs*] I wish I'd never had a thumb—nor a hand—

ANG. Yes, it would have been much more convenient; only then you couldn't have written me those darling love letters, that is, unless you wrote them with your toes, like the man at Barnum's; but no, no, I shouldn't have liked the sound of it. "Darling, I take my pen in my toes to write you a letter"—ugh!

[*Shivers. Takes hold of* EDWARD'S *thumb.*] Ah! you naughty thumb! You little know how unhappy you've made us!

EDW. I believe he does, the brute, and glories in it. You beast! I broke you once, years ago, and if there was only a crow-bar handy, by Jove, I'd do it again.

ANG. [*quickly*]. No, no, don't break it again. [*Suddenly.*] Oh, I wonder if that has anything to do with its shape. Perhaps it became cruel and avaricious quite by accident.

EDW. By Jove! most likely. I never thought of that. It may account for everything. Shall I have another try—explain the breakage to your father?

ANG. Do, dear, do. It may change his views entirely. [*Pushing him off.*] Run away at once; and mind you tell him the whole truth. Stay! [*Stopping him.*] Mightn't you mention that it has never been itself since it was broken; more wobbly-like; altogether different from your father's thumb—and your brother's thumb—and the family's thumbs generally—

EDW. Don't be afraid, I'll spin him a yarn!

ANG. [*calling after him*]. Don't forget—more wobbly-like. Dear Edward! I hope you'll be careful; of course, one ought always to speak the truth, especially to one's parents; but I know dear papa's ways so very well, and have noticed that he takes facts so much better after they have been touched up a little. [*Exit* EDWARD R.] *Dear father!* [*Rather angrily.*] I wonder if all philosophers are as tiresome as he is! He'll never let me get married. [*Sits by table* C.] This is the third time his fads have come between me and my suitors and I'm desperate this time, for I care for Edward, really and truly—a thousand times more than I did for the others. The others? Ah, yes! [*Opens photograph album.*] Here you are, Tom Pontifex. What a dear little man you were! Hair a trifle carroty, perhaps, but such a kind heart! Such delicious chocolate creams as you used to bring me! Papa was deep in Phrenology when you proposed, and insisted on feeling your bumps. He ruffled up your head till it looked like a carpet broom, and then declared that it had the

bump of wife-beating abnormally developed—and so, Tom, you was sent about your business. It turned out afterward that the bump was merely the result of incautiously taking the air in Union Square during the progress of a Socialist demonstration. [*Turns over leaves of album again.*] Fred Stokes was the next disappointment. That was in papa's Spiritualistic days. Fred was sent off into a trance and made to declare that he was a blood-stained bandit. [*Gazes at a certain picture.*] Ah, here you are, Fred. You have made a fortune on the stock exchange since then, but, alas! I shall never have the spending of it. Edward's a very long time; I wonder what they're talking about! Ah! [*Rises on seeing* EDWARD, *hand to her heart.*]

[EDWARD *enters rapidly with air of suppressed agitation and excitement.*]

ANG. [*eagerly*]. Well, well? Did he swallow your broken thumb?

EDW. No, and he's worse than ever. [*Throws himself on sofa.* ANGELA *sits beside him.*]

ANG. Worse than ever! How? [*Claps hands agitatedly.*]

EDW. He admitted there might be something in my story, but went on to say that to test the matter thoroughly he must make a careful examination of the lines of my hand. He got down another volume of the Palmistry book, opened at another diagram, compared it with my hand—and, oh [*groans*], his discoveries were simply appalling; in fact, I feel it is quite impossible you can ever marry the crushed and battered wretch that now crouches before you. [*Buries head in hands.*]

ANG. I expected it; that's just how Tom went on after his bumps were felt; but I didn't love then as I do now. I *can't* give you up, and, what's more, I won't. Look up, dear!

EDW. [*groans*]. Oh! I can't look a chicken in the face.

ANG. Well, I'm no chicken. I'm twenty-two. Do look up and tell me, tell me, what was this dreadful discovery?

EDW. [*speaking solemnly*]. Can you bear to hear it? It's awful!

ANG. Yes. I'll nerve myself.

EDW. Good. I'll wait a moment while you do it. [*Pauses, during which* ANGELA *clenches hands and makes slight contortions of face indicating her mental struggle.*] Are you nerved?

ANG. Yes, I'm nerved.

EDW. [*rises and shows hand*]. Well, do you see that line? That is the line of burglary. [ANGELA *gasps.*] That one running across—so—is the line of arson! [ANGELA *gives smothered cry.*] And that—oh, nerve yourself as much as ever you can, my Angy—that is the line of murder! [ANGELA *screams.*] In short, that is the sort of man I am.

ANG. [*rises and staggers away, covering face and shuddering.*] It is too, too dreadful. I'll not believe it.

EDW. Alas! there is no mistake about it. Thumbs you may explain away, but lines are realities.

ANG. But you never guessed you were this sort of man, did you, Eddie? You never *really* arsoned, murdered or burglared, did you?

EDW. No, but your father says that these evil passions are just now lying dormant; but they may break out at any moment, and before I know where I am I may find myself burglaring and murdering and arsoning all over the place. [*Takes stage* R.]

ANG. I see, and when they break out you'll break in with a dagger in one hand and a box of lucifers in the other! It's very, very awful! And you looked so harmless!

EDW. I suppose that now we must say farewell for ever? [*Takes her hand.*]

ANG. Yes, I suppose so. [*Looks at his thumb.*] Oh, you wicked, cruel, poor, dear thumb; you naughty five-in-a-row! [*Strokes his fingers, then slaps them.*]

EDW. [*holding up his hand*]. To think that this about-to-be-blood-stained monster has ever dared to clasp your innocent little palm! Look at the grinning lines of vice, there, and there, and there—in fact—everywhere! I feel as if I ought to start out looking for victims.

ANG. How mournfully interesting! [*Compares hand with hers, and then starts violently and exclaims:*] Oh!

EDW. What is it?

ANG. Look, look! Catch me, I am fainting—I—I've got them, too! Grimmer than yours!

EDW. Got what? [*Catching her.*]

ANG. The same lines.

EDW. Impossible!

ANG. See, see!

EDW. [*compares hands*]. Good heavens! It is true. [*Staggers, holding her.*] My brain reels—take hold of me—oh, no, of course, you can't. Let us stagger to a chair. [*They stagger to chair.*]

ANG. [*weeping*]. Oh, how wicked we are! [*Both groan, "Oh!"*] What will become of us! Do you think we shall live to be hanged?

EDW. [*moodily*]. Yes, we're young. I suppose we'll live to be hanged.

ANG. Oh, but I'd rather be hanged first and die afterward. But now I'm going to do my melancholy duty—warn papa to lock up all the razors, put burglar-alarms on his study windows, and order a portable fire-engine. Wretched old man; won't he be sorry now that he ever meddled with palmistry! My first arson shall be the burning of those books. [*Exits.*]

EDW. And my first murder, the man who wrote them! Ah, me! How little we know our own characters! [*Studies his palm.*] Who would have thought that such terrible potentialities could lie hidden in one's hand? But I'll cheat them yet. Yes, one way remains. Immediate death. I wonder what is the pleasantest mode of suicide? Razors?—no, I could never shave with them afterward. Drowning?—impossible, I can't swim. I must think it over. I wonder if there is a handbook on the subject? I'll look it up. Yes, the only career open to me now is to commit suicide as frequently as possible and each time in a manner more atrocious than the last.

ANG. [*rushes in*]. Oh, Edward, Edward!

EDW. Have you told your father?

ANG. Yes, and oh—poor papa! poor papa! [*Begins to weep.*]

EDW. [*gravely*]. Poor papa! Angy, you haven't made a start, have you [*indicating severing of wind-pipe*]?

ANG. No—not yet.

EDW. Ah! I could have forgiven you.

ANG. But poor papa!

EDW. Well, well! Is it arson? Did you set a match to him?

ANG. I showed him my hand, and bursting into tears he examined his own—and, oh, Edward—what do you think? He's worse than we are; the blow has almost killed him; oh, what a criminal family we are! He says there is no telling how soon we may begin. Fly from us while there is yet time. Fly!

EDW. What's the use of my flying? I am just as likely to make a start as you are.

ANG. Then come with us.

EDW. Where?

ANG. To the nearest police-station—to give ourselves into custody on suspicion. It would be such a comfort, dear, to be chained in the same dungeon with you.

EDW. Good! And your father across the corridor! Then let us to our doom. But hark, who's that calling?

ANG. It's papa's voice. [*Runs to door.*]

EDW. Perhaps the old boy is starting on the murderous war-path. I must be prepared. [*Takes up chair.*]

ANG. Hush! Papa is speaking. [*Calling off.*] What did you say? [*Listens at door* R.—*a pause.*] No? [*Pause.*] Really! [*Listens with growing pleasure.*] Oh, how delightful—what a relief—how happy I. [*Runs up to* EDWARD.] Did you hear that, dearest? It's all a mistake.

EDW. A mistake!

ANG. Yes, papa has been looking at the wrong diagram.

EDW. Wrong diagram?

ANG. Yes, Diagram No. 220 instead of No. 230, and all our lines, instead of being vicious are those of morality, long life, and boundless wealth.

EDW. Angy!

ANG. Eddie! [*Fall into each other's arms limply.*]

EDW. What a relief! But we've had an awful fright, I shall remember it to my dying day. However, it's all right now, I suppose, so we'll go at once and get his formal consent to our engagement. [*Walking together to door.*]

ANG. Yes, he'll have to give it now.

EDW. Rather!

ANG. Because you know we've carried it by [*holding up hands as if in the act of voting*].

BOTH. A Show of Hands.

CURTAIN.

HIAWATHIAN.

He killed the noble Mudjokivis,
With the skin he made him mittens,
Made them with the fur side inside;
Made them with the skin side outside;
He, to get the warm side inside,
Put the inside skin side outside;
He, to get the cold side outside,
Put the warm side fur side inside;
That's why he put the fur side inside,
Why he put the skin side outside,
Why he turned them inside outside.

THE SHADOW BABY.

An Irish Dance and Pantomime.

What is it, baby Kathie, wid yer eyes o' Irish blue?
Tuggin' away at me hand to tag along o' you?
Somethin' follows you roun'—oh, yes! there it is, I see,—
A black, black shadow baby, cunnin', as cunnin' can be!
Come, we will catch it. [*Introduce a pantomime.*]
'Tis runnin' away again.
Now, we have got it, and here it shall stay.
Sure, it is lost now, or hidin' somewhere.
There I just see it behind that old chair.
Come, we will catch it—'tis gone through the door.
'Tis here on the wall, 'tis here on the floor.

What is it, baby Kathie, wid your eyes o' Irish blue?
Cryin', baby Kathie? Sure the shadow's cryin' too!
Poor shadow baby, without any name;
Hoo! wipe your eyes; see! 'tis doin' the same.
Dance away, Kathie, on heel an' on toe,
Whirl on your twinkle feet, faster and slow. [*Introduce a dance.*]
Gay little shadow as gay as can be,
Gay little shadow, dancin' wid thee.
[*Pantomime of taking hold of the baby's hands and dancing with her.*]

What is it, baby Kathie, wid your eyes of Irish blue?
Laughin', baby Kathie? Sure, the shadow's laughin' too.
[*Catch up baby and run off stage.*]

A BACKWARD CHILD.

H. L. CHILDE PEMBERTON.

Text and Stage-Business Edited and Revised
By PAULINE PHELPS and MARION SHORT.

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CHARACTERS: MISS MILLIKEN, governess.
FLORENCE, aged twelve.

SCENE: Private school-room. Map on wall. Platform and teacher's desk, R. Small desk and chair for child, L. Globe or other school-furnishings on teacher's table. Door C. in flat.

DISCOVERED: MISS MILLIKEN *at her desk.*

MISS MILLIKEN [*solus*]. My first morning with Florence, my new pupil. A most pert, disagreeable child, I saw that at once. All children are more or less pert and disagreeable, however. It is my belief that a kind Providence should have arranged for them on a separate planet, developed in incubators, until maturity. Her mother says Florence is extremely backward, and that her father allows her to do anything she pleases. Well, if I can only keep my temper during the first morning, so that I get my salary in advance, I shall not worry about keeping it in future. [*Enter* FLORENCE, *skips behind* MISS M., *and nearly tilts her backward on her chair.*]

FLORENCE. Morning, Milliken.

MISS M. [*shrieks*]. Heavens! [*Recovers herself and draws away chair.*] Good morning, my little dear! [*Aside.*] Imper-

tinent brat! [*Direct.*] What an engaging smile you're wearing this morning!

F. Huh! I'd catch cold if that's all I wore.

MISS M. Now, my little dear, if you'll kindly be seated—

F. That's the second time you've sprung "little dear" on me already. I don't approve of familiarity on short acquaintance, as the old maid said when the pug dog flew at her and tore her petticoats.

MISS M. [*shocked*]. My dear child, err—Florence—

F. What's the matter? Got a pain?

MISS M. [*aside*]. Pained to think I didn't ask more salary. [*Direct.*] You're such a bright little snake—child, I mean,—that I shall have to work very hard to keep up with you. Now, if you will kindly sit down in that chair—no *sit* down in the chair, don't kneel on it—and don't stare at me over the back of it. Why, child, what *are* you looking at?

F. [*still kneeling and staring at* MISS M. *over back of chair*]. I thought so at first, and now I'm sure of it. You've got a dab of whitewash right on the end of your nose. [*As* MISS M. *applies handkerchief hastily.*] Oh, what made you take it off? You looked awfully funny. Even funnier than you do without it.

MISS M. Is that a respectful way to address your governess, Florence? Think for a moment.

F. [*sinking sulkily into chair*]. Mamma don't want me to think. Thinking starts headaches and headaches fade your hair, and when a girl's hair fades she's a dead one. [*Jumps up and looks closely at* MISS M.'s *hair.*] You're sort of half dead yourself, ain't you?

MISS M. [*indignantly*]. Sit down this instant or I'll— [*Florence skips back and jumps into chair*]. We will commence with a few general geographical questions, to find out where you are.

F. I know where I are. Second story front.

MISS M. [*rings bell for order*]. What is a promontory?

F. I know that. It's where you climb up and up winding stairs in a tower to look at scenery, and then when you get there

you don't look at it, you just hold hands with a young man. I know, 'cause I've seen sister, and I'm going to when I grow up. And Cousin Lucy says—

MISS M. Never mind what your Cousin Lucy says. Don't tilt your chair.

F. Why not?

MISS M. Why not? Because you'll be over backward directly.

F. Well, father says I'm backward, anyhow.

MISS M. Never mind what your father says, but attend to me. [*Questions at random from book.*] On what seacoast is the town of Joppa situated?

F. [*vaguely*]. I don't know. [*Chants.*] "There was a young lady of Joppa, who came a society cropper—"

MISS M. A *what?*

F. Don't you know what a society cropper is? Oh! you are behind the times! I say, Miss Milliken, do tell me what you think. When a person's in society, like my mamma, and when a person, who's her friend, becomes a society cropper, you know, like Mrs. Ponsonby Masher, do you think it's fair to chuck her over?

MISS M. My dear, these are not questions I can discuss with a child like you.

F. That's because you're not in society, you know; but I've heard my mamma and my aunt say—

MISS M. Never mind what your mamma and your aunt say. Attend to me. [*Questions from book.*] Attend to me, I say. What is a tidal wave?

F. [*enthusiastically*]. I know. You get it at the hairdresser's. Did yours grow on your head, or is it a false front?

MISS M. Incorrect. We will commence at the beginning of geography in our next lesson.

F. [*complainingly*]. But I don't want to know geography until I start on a wedding tower. When I marry my first husband I'm going to Niagara, and when I marry the second one I'm going to see an earthquake, and when I tie up with number three

I'm going to a tropical country where there's fire and brimstone volcanoes all the time. Say, you look tired.

MISS M. [*gaspingly*]. I am—recovering. We will drop geography for the present. How far did you get in arithmetic?

F. Page two—and then the puppy chewed up the book. And after that he could bark your age. No, I don't mean *your* age, because he might die before he got through, but folks that's young—

MISS M. [*very indignantly*]. Silence. No more digressions, if you please. Do you know anything whatever of arithmetic?

F. O, you bet [*stands up and recites parrot fashion*]. Multiplication is vexation, division is as bad, subtraction is what puzzles me and addition makes me mad.

MISS M. Very well, then, I think we might take up vulgar fractions.

F. Not much you won't. You'll get discharged. Ma's trying to break into society now, and she says anything vulgar gives her a cat-fit. Why, one day when pa went around in his shirt sleeves—

MISS M. I'm not interested in your pa. This lesson is—

F. [*much surprised*]. Oh, ain't you? Why, ma said you looked like the kind of desperate old maid that would be just crazy after any man—

MISS M. [*furiously*]. Silence. Let us change the subject.

F. I'd rather you changed your dress. That one looks just like cold gingerbread, and I always hated cold gingerbread.

MISS M. [*aside*]. Oh, I'm rapidly approaching the end of the string. [*To* FLORENCE.] We will have an exercise in mental arithmetic. Suppose there were three apples on one table—

F. Ripe ones?

MISS M. [*continuing example*]. Two on another—

F. Specked ones or just as good?

MISS M. [*continuing*]. And one on the mantel-piece. What would they make?

F. Stomach-ache, if you eat 'em all, and apple pie if you didn't.

MISS M. Don't take me up like that [*shoves* FLORENCE *violently into chair*].

F. Then don't you put me down like that.

MISS M. [*screaming*]. Silence! [*More gently.*] Now, about your grammar. I suppose you've been grounded in grammar?

F. Oh! you don't mean grounded; you mean floored. I've been floored in grammar heaps and heaps of times!

MISS M. I mean grounded.

F. No, you don't.

MISS M. Yes, I do, I tell you. Don't answer me. [*Pause.*] How many parts of speech are there? [*Silence on the part of* FLORENCE.] How many parts of speech are there? [*Continued silence on the part of* FLORENCE.] How many parts of speech are there? [*Angrily.*] Why don't you answer?

F. You told me not to answer, so I shan't.

MISS M. I did not mean you were not to answer my questions.

F. Then why don't you say what you mean?

MISS M. The fact is, you *can't* answer! You are without exception the most backward child—[FLORENCE *grabs book out of* MISS MILLIKEN'S *hand*]. Give me back that book.

F. Not if I know it!

MISS M. But you don't know it—that's just it. Give it me back this minute. Give it back this minute. [*Chases* FLORENCE *about room trying to recover book. Aside.*] Oh, I can never catch her, the little eel. [FLORENCE *hides under teacher's desk.*] But I must not let her know she has defeated me. [*Very mildly.*] Come out, dear. I was simply chasing you for the sake of exercise. [*As* FLORENCE *emerges.*] Keep the book, I had quite finished with it. Now, stand still, and let me hear you recite some poetry.

F. [*skips to the front*]. Oh! I can do lots of that. I'm awfully clever—real jam, my papa says—and he knows!

MISS M. Stop a minute. Put your hands behind you. [FLORENCE *reluctantly does so.*] Feet together—first position.

F. [*sulkily*]. It gives me a crick in my conscience to stand like that.

MISS M. I've no doubt you think your own way is best, but you must learn to do as you are told. Now, go on and say: "How doth the little busy bee—"

F. "How doth the little busy bee
Delight to bark and bite,
And gather honey every day
To eat it up at night."

MISS M. Stop! stop! stop! That's not right.

F. Yes, it is.

MISS M. No, it is not.

F. Indeed and indeed, Miss Milliken, I can show it you in the book, "Alice in Wonderland."

MISS M. Dr. Watts didn't write "Alice in Wonderland," you little goose.

F. [*beginning to cry*]. Oh, w-well—if you—d-dont—b-believe what I say—I shall g-go and t-tell my p-papa!

MISS M. [*aside*]. Now she's going to cry! This will never do my first morning. [*Aloud.*] Well, go on, my dear child, and say whatever you like.

F. May I say "The D-Duck and the K-Kangaroo?"

MISS M. The Duck and the what?

F. "The Duck and the Kangaroo."

MISS M. I haven't the least idea who wrote it, but you may, if you like.

F. Don't you know "The Duck and the Kangaroo?" Oh! you are behind the times!

MISS M. [*severely*]. Well, go on. Hands behind you—[FLORENCE *puts her hands behind her*]—feet together—first position.

F. [*showing signs of crying again*]. But I *can't* say "The Duck and Kangaroo" like that, nobody could, because you have to make a lot of gestures with your feet.

MISS M. Well, say it anyhow you like—only say it.

F. [*recites, hopping violently about room as she does so*].

"Said the Duck to the Kangaroo,
Good gracious! how you hop!
Over the land and water too,
As if you never would stop."
Said the Kangaroo: "I'm ready,
All in the moonlight pale;
But to keep me straight, dear Duck sit steady,
And quite at the end of my tail."
So away they went with a hop and a bound,
And they hopped the whole world three times round;
And who so happy, oh, who,
As the Duck and the Kangaroo?"

[FLORENCE *imitates hopping of a kangaroo. Bumps into* MISS M. *and knocks her into a chair, where she sits gasping.*]

F. [*after a pause*]. Don't you like it?

MISS M. Like it? Who would like being knocked off their feet? How dare you! Apologize this very minute! Say, I am very sorry; I beg your pardon, my dear Miss Milliken.

F. I am very sorry; I beg your pardon—

MISS M. [*prompting*]. My dear—

F. Miss Milliken, how long do you think it would take a kangaroo to hop round the world?

MISS M. It couldn't be done—so don't ask silly questions.

F. Why couldn't it be done?

MISS M. Could a kangaroo hop over the sea? No. So there's an end of it.

F. No, his tail is the end of it!

MISS M. Sit down and don't speak another word till I tell you, or I'll keep you after school. I am going to set you a copy.

[*Begins to write, bending her head very low like a near-sighted person.* FLORENCE *examines* MISS M.'s *hair with interest across table.*]

MISS M. [*looking up suddenly*]. What do you want?

F. I was only looking at the color of your hair. It's so funny.

MISS M. Funny! funny! I have had my hair called many things,—yes, many things—golden tresses—raven locks—but

never, no, never, did I hear it stigmatized as funny! What do you mean, Miss?

F. It's all sorts of colors. Red, white and blue in spots, you know.

Miss M. [*furiously*]. Silence, and attend to your own affairs.

F. [*aside*]. Now she's mad. I'll have to get her over it. [*Wheedlingly.*] Oh, Miss Milliken. [Miss M. *slams books about on desk in a rage.*] Miss Milliken, *dear* Miss Milliken. My ma said something awful nice about you.

Miss M. [*somewhat mollified*]. Indeed! Nice, you say?

F. Yes, about your looks. *Awful* nice.

Miss M. [*smirking*]. Indeed? I recognized at once that your mother had excellent taste. [*After a slight pause.*] Well?

F. [*stupidly*]. Yes, I'm well.

Miss M. But aren't you going to tell me what the something nice is your mother said, child?

F. Yes, it sounded just like a circus. Ma said your nose had started out to be a camel's hump, and then changed its mind and turned into a parachute; and Aunt Lou said she guessed you was *one* governess ma wouldn't be jealous of, and pa said after he'd once looked at your face that he didn't blame you for bein' an old maid, for goodness knows it wasn't your fault. There, ain't that nice?

Miss M. [*hysterically*]. Unspeakable! atrocious! insulting! Go, tell your father I want to see him at once. [*Aside.*] I shall tell him I'm in need of money, request as a favor a month's wages in advance, and then leave on the first train. [*Direct.*] Send your father to me, I say.

F. All right, but I hope you're not going to ask him for any money, because if you do, you won't get it.

Miss M. And how do you know I wouldn't get an advance, if I asked it?

F. Because pa said you'd be glad of a job for six months just for the sake of hangin' on anywhere, he guessed, and when you got anxious for your pay he could hire someone else.

MISS M. Oh, where is he? Let me set eyes on him just once, and—

F. He's in the garden squirting the flowers, but don't come at him too sudden, because he'll turn the hose on you if you do—[MISS MILLIKEN *smites door violently with palm and exits*]. She's gone. Goody, and now I'll get another one. I just love to change governesses. 'Cause changing governesses is fun, and the best way for pa and ma to bring a backward child forward. [*Violent shrieks heard outside.*] Oh, she came on him and the hose sudden, and got squirted. Oh, and I missed it! Oh! oh! [*Runs off hastily as curtain falls.*]

COOKIN' THINGS.

BURGES JOHNSON.

When my mother's cookin' things
You bet I never wait
To put away my ball er gun,—
I drop 'em where they are an' run
Fer fear I'll be too late.
The most exciting kind o' game
Er toy, er story-book,
I let 'em go, an' never mind,
The very minute that I find
My mother's goin' to cook.

When my mother's cookin' things,
Then you jus' oughter smell
The spices an' sweets an' such,—

My mouth gets waterin' so much
I almost have to yell!
She opens up the oven door
Sometimes, to take a look,
An' then I jab 'em while they're hot,
To see if they are done er not,—
When mother lets me cook.

When my mother's cookin' things,
P'r'aps it's pies to bake,
Er doughnuts bobbin' up an' down
In boilin' grease till they are brown,
Er p'r'aps it's johny-cake.
Whatever kind of thing it is,
I always like to hook
The biggest piece of dough I can
An' bake it in a patty-pan,
When me an' mother cook.

When my mother's cookin' things,
It pays you if you wait
An' eat 'em hot, right off the tin.—
It's twice as good as anythin'
Could be, et off the plate!
An' I guess *you'd* find out fer sure
That I was not mistook
In any single thin' I've said,
If you could taste the gingerbread
I've helped my mother cook.

THE CRYSTAL-GAZER

LEOPOLD MONTAGUE.

Text and Stage-Business Edited and Revised
By PAULINE PHELPS and MARION SHORT.

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CHARACTERS:—MADAME LA SORCIERE.
MISS BESSIE BLANK.

NOTE.—If necessary, the part of the clairvoyante can be taken by a man calling himself "The Red Magician," and merely adapting text to suit change of sex.

SCENE: Drawing-room. Entrances R. and L. Table R. C. Arm-chair R. of table. Sofa down L. On table some unopened letters and a glass bowl containing water. Enter MADAME LA SORCIERE, in teagown, R.

LA SORCIERE. How many letters there are this morning! Good, very good! Everybody wants to know the future. Rich and poor, they are all the same. [*Sits in armchair by table.*] That is why I have set up as a soothsayer. It pays well, and I may honestly say that I know as much of the future as anybody else. [*Opens letter—reads.*] "Madame, I wish to consult you on a matter greatly affecting my happiness. I have been in the West Indies, where I made the acquaintance of a charming young lady." [*Spoken.*] Ah, a woman at the bottom of it as usual. [*Reads.*] "We traveled to England on board the same steamer, and on the way became engaged." [*Spoken.*] Of course, the usual consequence. [*Reads.*] "She left me at Gravesend." I see—as soon as she could get away from him. [*Reads.*] "To

join her aunt, who had come down from town to meet her," [*Spoken.*] Oh, only her aunt! [*Reads.*] "with the understanding that I was to call upon her next day. Imagine my dismay on finding that I had lost the address she gave me, having written it on my cuff, which I inadvertently sent to the wash. All efforts to trace her having proved futile, I am now at my wits' end, so I come to you, having heard of your marvelous powers as a clairvoyante. I trust you may be able to assist me, and accordingly purpose calling on you at three o'clock to-morrow afternoon. I remain, Madam, yours faithfully, Kenneth Frazer, 43 Regent Row." Three o'clock this afternoon. H'm, that's rather short notice, Mr. Kenneth Frazer, I always like plenty of notice. It is surprising how much one can tell about a person's past if one only has time to make a few judicious inquiries beforehand. Why, I can even tell people what they have come to consult me about—when I have previously found out. Ha, ha, ha! What gulls people are! Now, there's the young lady who is to call upon me this morning. She has lost her poodle and wants me to find it. First I shall describe the poodle. She will think that supernatural, but my maid has found out all about him from her cook. Then she will want to know where he is, and as I have already traced him to the Dogs' Home, the oracle will speak. Ha, ha! It may mean a five-pound note. [*Bell off L.*] There she is. [*Rises.*] My maid will show her in here where I will keep her waiting a few minutes to impress her—and prepare her for my mysterious costume and foreign accent. Oh, what a deceitful world this is! [*Takes up letters and exits, R.*]

[*Enter* BESSIE BLANK, *L.*]

BESSIE. So this is the room of the mysterious Madame La Sorciere! I declare I feel quite creepy! Yet I don't see any retorts or alembics about. No, not even a stuffed crocodile. [*Sits on sofa.*] I hope—I hope it isn't under the sofa! [*Rises, business.*] No, it's only a stool. [*Sees bowl on table.*] What's this? Oh, I know. It's for divination. You look into the water and you see [*business*] nothing but the bottom! Well, I hope Madame will be able to see Kenneth. Where can he be? What

can have become of him? [*Sits on sofa.*] It's enough to make one cry—just when one has got engaged, to go and lose one's lover like a needle in a haystack. But I won't give way. Perhaps Madame can tell me where he is. They say she is simply wonderful. If Kenneth is on earth she'll see him in the water.

[*Enter* MADAME LA SORCIÈRE, *R., wearing magician's robes.*]

BESS. The clairvoyante herself!

LA S. [*with foreign accent*]. Welcome. Do not rise.

BESS. I have come—[*half rises*].

LA S. I know why you have come [*taps her forehead significantly*].

BESS. No? Really? How wonderful! [*Sits.*]

LA S. You would have news of your faithful companion. Am I not right? [*Bends and strokes imaginary dog's back.*]

BESS. Yes, yes. How clever you are! [*Aside.*] She's making magic passes. And you think he is faithful?

LA S. I know he is. [*Pats imaginary dog's head.*]

BESS. Oh, you have already removed a load from my mind!

LA S. [*aside*]. She'll find those loads are expensive. But he has been led astray.

BESS. Astray? Tell me no more! Well, why don't you go on?

LA S. [*sitting by her*]. One moment. For describing the object of your thoughts by thought-transference or animal magnetism my charge is one guinea. Should you want to know more, there is the crystal bowl in which I can invariably see and describe what is passing or has recently occurred in any part of the globe. Divination by means of crystal bowl, five guineas. I wish to avoid any possible misunderstanding.

BESS. Yes—exactly—but I think I'll begin with the animal magnetism. I like magnetism, and it's cheaper.

LA S. Certainly, my dear. There is nothing to prevent our adopting the more expensive methods later on. Your hand, child. [*Business.*] Kindly remove your glove. [*Business.*] Now think of the lost one.

BESS. Heigh-ho! When *don't* I think of him!

LA S. [*scans* BESSIE'S *palm closely*]. He is dark.

BESS. He is. Looks like a Spanish Grandee. [*Sighs.*]

LA S. With curly hair.

BESS. Quite right. Each curl the snare for a heart. [*Sighs.*]

LA S. And beautiful brown eyes.

BESS. Yes—dear fellow! One of them turns in a little.

LA S. Though his ears are perhaps a trifle long.

BESS. Strange, but I never noticed his ears. [*Reflectively.*] Well, perhaps they are.

LA S. He has been recently shaved.

BESS. Why, of course, he's always well groomed.

LA S. And was washed last Saturday.

BESS. Really! What intimate details!

LA S. Ah, you see I know all about him.

BESS. So it seems. How does he spend his time?

LA S. He once followed you into church.

BESS. He did.

LA S. And had to be removed by the pew-opener.

BESS. No, no!

LA S. Yes—because he persisted in getting on your lap.

BESS. [*indignantly*]. I assure you such a thing never occurred.

LA S. You must have forgotten it. At least, that's what he wanted to do. Animal magnetism cannot lie. It tells me he is intelligent and affectionate.

BESS. There you are right. You have told me his virtues—now tell me his faults.

LA S. Well, he is rather given to overeating.

BESS. I've never noticed it. The between-meals habit perhaps.

LA S. Yes, he would eat all day long if he had the opportunity.

BESS. How horrid! So unromantic!

LA S. Then he spends too much of his time in the kitchen with the maids.

BESS. With the maids? That's *too* romantic.

LA S. Yes—he is particularly fond of the cook.

BESS. Oh, the wretch! Go on! Go on!

LA S. [*dropping hand*]. That is all I can see. I can tell you no more without resorting to the crystal globe. [*Crossing R.*] If you would like me to use it I can tell you why he left home and what he is doing at this moment. But as I told you, the fee is—[*walks toward bowl*].

BESS. [*Aside*]. She described Kenneth, when I never even told her what I came for; then that cook! Oh, I'd give my last penny to find out all about that cook! [*Taking out purse. To* LA S.] Five pounds? [*Rises.*]

LA S. Guineas, my dear.

BESS. Of course. [*Giving money*]. I think you will find that is right. Not that one could be jealous of a cook, but,—

LA S. [R. C.]. A thousand thanks. But I may say at once that if I am the means of restoring your lost darling, I shall expect—

BESS. Go on. When I know all, I may not want my lost darling.

[LA S. *walks round table, making passes over bowl, then sits on chair by table, gazing into bowl.* BESSIE *stands L. C. Slow music.*]

LA S. Ah, the water turns milky. Now it clears, and I see a street. The lamps are lit, so it is evening. A stout woman is walking on the side-way.

BESS. It's that cook!

LA S. And he is following her.

BESS. I knew it! My idol walks on feet of clay!

LA S. But see! He in turn is followed by a rough-looking man in moleskin breeches.

BESS. The cook's young man. Well, it serves him right.

LA S. He lingers at a corner. Oh, he is in great danger! The ruffian deftly throws a noose round his neck and—

BESS. Good Heavens! When perhaps he only meant to ask the cook for a tart. Go on—I can bear it. What do you see? Does he escape?

LA S. I see the interior of a miserably furnished garret. There is a sort of cage, and he is within.

BESS. Oh, my poor darling! Yet he lives—he lives!

LA S. Yes. Ha! He is tearing out one of the bars with his teeth.

BESS. His teeth!

LA S. They give way!

BESS. What, his teeth?

LA S. No, the bars. He rushes out of the house. He is free.

BESS. Saved! Ah, I breathe again.

LA S. No. He is wandering about the slums. He is lost.

BESS. Lost—lost in London! But he ought to know his way about.

LA S. He is half-starved. His tongue is hanging out.

BESS. Oh, it is too horrible! If he should catch cold and become speechless!

LA S. He shivers!

BESS. Tell me—how is he dressed?

LA S. Dressed? He has nothing on but his collar.

BESS. Oh! I can't imagine it!

LA S. In vain he begs to the passers-by for a bone.

BESS. Hard-hearted brutes! Do they refuse him?

LA S. He sees the remains of a bologna in the gutter.

BESS. Don't say he eats it. I could never forgive that.

LA S. No—he is rolling upon the—

BESS. The ground! I see. His strength has given way. He is dying! Deserted! starved! friendless! alone!

LA S. No. I see the figure of a policeman bending over him.

BESS. Then he is rescued? Tell me he is rescued.

LA S. The picture fades and reforms itself. I see the interior of a cell. He is chained to the wall.

BESS. What? Arrested for being lost? And this is law—justice! Yet we live in an enlightened age!

LA S. Next I see him in a van.

BESS. Black Maria! His proud head bowed in shame!

LA S. Which conveys him to a building surrounded by a high railing. Ah, I recognize the place. I see no more. He must be in that building now.

BESS. What building? Where? How?

LA S. Stop. A scene from the future discloses itself. His troubles are at an end. You have come to his rescue. The barred gate is thrown open and he rushes forth joyfully wagging his tail.

BESS. Wagging his what?

LA S. [*rising*]. Yes—found—safe and sound—at the Home for Lost Dogs!

BESS. What on earth are you talking about?

LA S. Why, your poor lost poodle dog, Zou-Zou.

BESS. I don't understand. I never had a poodle dog.

LA S. Eh? [*Aside.*] Can I have made a mistake? [*To* BESS.] You are surely the lady who made an appointment for eleven this morning?

BESS. I made no appointment.

LA S. Then what in the world have you come about?

BESS. You told me you knew what I came about. Imposter!

LA S. [*aside*]. This is awkward. [*Aloud.*] The fact is I mistook you for another person. If you insist on calling on me without making a proper appointment, it is no fault of mine if you have to put up with a vision intended for somebody else.

BESS. That's all very fine, but what about *my* feelings? Here I've been working myself up and upsetting my nerves about the adventures of some miserable mongrel, thinking all the time it was my—my—oh, it's too outrageous!

LA S. [*pointing to bowl*]. Perhaps you would like me to try again.

BESS. Certainly not.

LA S. As you please. You have had a very good vision belonging to some one else, and you must make the best of it.

BESS. I want my money back.

LA S. I make it a rule never to return fees.

BESS. Then I'll tell the world what you are. You are a cheat—a trickster—a charlatan!

LA S. Softly, softly! They won't believe you.

BESS. Yes, I'll show you up. I can do it, too. My pa's a magistrate and I've an uncle on the County Council.

LA S. [*aside*]. That is serious. I abominate pas and uncles.

BESS. If you want to know what I came for—I came to ask you for the present address of the gentleman to whom I am engaged. I shall find him, never fear, without *your* assistance, and it may interest you to know that he writes for all the society papers.

LA S. [*aside*]. Good gracious!

BESS. He'll advertise your show for you. [*At door L.*] Good morning. [*Goes out.*]

LA S. She'll ruin me!

BESS. [*re-appearing*]. You may perhaps know his name. It is Kenneth Fraser.

LA S. Eh? [*Aside.*] Where have I seen that name? I know! [*Aloud.*] Stop! Stop! I've another vision!

BESS. What is it now?

LA S. I can find him for you. I swear it!

BESS. [*sarcastically*]. Oh, yes—following the cook or at the Dogs' Home.

LA S. No. Turn your back so as not to break the new spell I shall weave. I will tell you something about this man which you will at once recognize as true.

BESS. [*doubtfully as she turns her back*]. Well, I'll give you one more trial.

LA S. 'Tis all I ask. [*Hastily snatches up the Frazer letter and reads from it surreptitiously.*] You became engaged to him on shipboard.

BESS. True, true! We were both so much in love that we entirely forgot to be seasick.

LA S. He left you at Gravesend.

BESS. You've hit that nail on the head. Go on.

LA S. [*scanning letter carefully*]. And the crystal bowl tells me he is searching madly for you and may himself be found at No. 43 Regent Row [*hastily conceals letter and peers into bowl*]. There!

BESS. [*turning enthusiastically*]. Yes, that is his address. Now you mention it, it comes back to me. Kenneth Frazer, 43 Regent Row, and searching madly for me! Oh, bliss! I'll send him a telegram at once. Oh, madam, you are wonderful! I'll recommend you to all my friends. I forgive you the cook, the Black Maria, and the dog.

LA S. [*bowing graciously*]. Thank you. I always do my best to satisfy my patrons, though sometimes, as in your case, it requires the employment of a little *doggerel* to do it. Call again. [*Makes deep curtsy as* BESSIE *bows herself out.*]

CURTAIN.

PORE AUNT DINAH.

VIOLET ETYNGE MITCHELL.

Pore Aunt Dinah! she's a-settin' all erlone
Like a June bug a-roostin' on a tree;
She 's a-singin' to herself de songs ob long ergo
In de days 'fore de niggars was set free.
"Hi! dar! Ho, dar!" (Watch her feet a-tappin',

A-keepin' time to music long gone by;
She's a-listenin' to de fiddle
While de folks come up de middle,
And yo' mos' can see de couples passin' nigh.)

Pore Aunt Dinah! she's a-gettin' ole,
'Pears like she mus' be nigh on eighty-fo,
But when de dew am drappin'
Yo' can hear dose feet a-tappin',
While she makes believe she's young agin, once mo'.
"Hi! dar! Ho! dar!" (Hear her voice a-callin'
A-callin' to de folks she used ter know:)
"Nancy, don' yo' shilly shally;
Watch dose pumpkin pies, yo' Sally!
While yo' elders an' yo' batters grease do flo'."

"Say, Aunt Dinah!" (de little darkies ask her)
"We don' hear no scrapin' ob no bow;
Whar am de pone cake an' pumpkin-pie yo're smellin'?
What fo' yo' cry an' holler so?"
"Oh, my! Oh, my!" (see her tears a-fallin';
But she smile, an' she answer, berry low,)
"Don' yo' hear dat banjo ringin', an' Marm Juley's voice a-singin'?"
Den de little darkies listen—an' say, "No."

Some night, I t'ink, when de yaller moon's a-shinin',
An' de fire-flies a-dancin' to an' fro,
Pore Aunt Dinah eill walk out among de shadders,
An' meet dose she loved, so long ago.
"Hi! dar! Ho! dar!" (we'll hear her voice a-callin'
While de tree-branch throw ghosties on de flo').
"I'se a-comin', Nancy,—Sally—
An' it's dark aong de valley,
But I see de bright lights all erlong de sho'."

THE CONFEDERATES.

Text and Stage-Business Edited and Revised
By PAULINE PHELPS and MARION SHORT.

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CHARACTERS: MR. JOHN WARDALE, aged twenty-six.
MISS VALENTIA MANNINGTON, aged eighteen.

SCENE: A garden lighted by Chinese lanterns. Enter from the house JOHN and VALENTIA.

JOHN [*motioning* VALENTIA *to rustic seat*]. I say, the evening begins well. That was a splendid waltz. Perfect floor, perfect music, perfect partner, eh, Valentia? You will have to dance with me all night. [*Sits beside her.*]

VALENTIA. I shouldn't mind, but what would mamma say?

JOHN. Has a modern mother any control over her daughters?

VAL. Not exactly, but she can say things, you know [*unfurls fan*].

JOHN. I don't fancy she dislikes me, at any rate.

VAL. No—but she doesn't like me to waste my time—and [*hesitating*] she knows—[*opens and shuts fan nervously*].

JOHN. That I am not a marrying man. I should think not, indeed. [*Laughing.*]

VAL. Ha! ha! Fancy *you* being married!

JOHN [*doubtfully*]. Um—err—is that complimentary?

VAL. It would be too funny, ha, ha!

JOHN. You can't imagine me married, can you?

VAL. No, indeed. But—Jack—you—you might be engaged.

JOHN. Being engaged is apt to lead to being married.

VAL. It needn't.

JOHN. Breach of promise. [*Facetiously moves away, warding her off with both hands.*]

VAL. Oh! No nice girl—

JOHN [*lazily*]. You are the only nice girl I know, and—[*sits close to her again*].

VAL. [*desperately*]. Well, then, Jack, would you mind being engaged to me just for five hours?

JOHN. Val—my dear girl—[*rises and walks away a few steps, then laughs nervously and returns to back of bench, leaning over to talk with her*].

VAL. [*speaking very fast*]. Jack, you once taught me a slang word—we always said we were "pals," didn't we?

JOHN. Yes, and always shall be.

VAL. I want you to be a real "pal" and help me. [*Lays hand on his arm.*]

JOHN. Yes, what is it? Want me to take you to supper, or get you tickets for—

VAL. Oh, none of that nonsense! [*Moves fan impatiently.*] Listen—I am bothered out of my life by mamma and Lord Sturley; you know him?

JOHN. He is a very good parti—not so good as I am [*laughing*], but—

VAL. But old! [*Makes wry face.*]

JOHN. Make you a widow the sooner!

VAL. Don't say that, Jack. But, isn't he hideous?

JOHN. Diamonds!

VAL. It wouldn't improve his nose if it were *set* with diamonds. [*Plaintively.*] Oh, Jack, I didn't think you would take mamma's part against me. I think he is simply hateful.

JOHN. Well, then, don't marry him; it's quite easy. Besides, that man's sailing for Gibraltar, isn't he, to-morrow?

VAL. Yes; that's just it; and he means to propose to me before he goes. Mamma wishes it, Aunt Margaret wishes it, Frank wishes it, they all—

JOHN. And they all—mother, aunt and brother—bully you? It's a shame; I'll do anything I can for you—come now! [*He comes down to front of bench again. She rises to meet him and they shake hands enthusiastically; then they promenade up and down as they talk.*]

VAL. Jack, you are a good "pal." Well, then, if you really think you can bear it—it's not for long—would you mind being engaged to me, Jack, till the end of this ball, and I'll do as much for you another day, I promise you.

JOHN. No fear. Once engaged, twice shy. But, look here; this must be properly managed if I am to have a share in it. I don't think—excuse me—you have not had much experience—nor have I for that matter. But we'll pull it through somehow. Now we shall have to be rather distant.

VAL. Distant?

JOHN. Almost as distant as if we were married. People might talk—

VAL. But I want them to!

JOHN. Ah! but disagreeably. They would say, "Poor things, they've got it badly!" or "They are very far gone." You wouldn't like that, would you? And there's another thing to think of. Which of us is to be jilted?

VAL. Oh, me, of course. [*She comes to an abrupt stop. He faces her squarely.*]

JOHN. Generous girl! I couldn't think of allowing it, though. No, you shall jilt me—no one ever did before. It will do me good.

VAL. Really and truly, Jack, I think you can stand it better than I can. I am sure it would do you no harm to be thrown over by such an eccentric girl.

JOHN. By such a beautiful girl! All right. Now we must

go and tell your mother; everybody in the room will know in a quarter of an hour. Are you aware of that?

VAL. [*laughing hysterically*]. Of course, including—Lord Sturley.

JOHN [*admiringly*]. You have plenty of pluck, more than I have. Come along, then. [*Aside.*] How the fellows will laugh! I shall be chaffed unmercifully. They're playing a waltz. We might dance in together to start the scandal properly. [*They waltz off R. to music heard off.*]

[*Curtain drops a moment to indicate brief lapse of time between scenes.*

* * * * * * * *

[*It is last dance of evening. Enter* JOHN *and* VALENTIA *to same seat in garden.*]

JOHN. Well, I've been patted on the back, and exhorted to be cheerful, and bidden to make you a good husband, and chaffed almost beyond the brink of endurance. [*Gives sigh of utter exhaustion.*]

VAL. And I've been told you were a good sort, and envied by my girl friends and congratulated to distraction. [*Falls into seat.*]

JOHN. Thank goodness, it's over. I had no idea it was like that. I wouldn't go through it again for worlds. [*Sits at her side.*]

VAL. So you'll never be married?

JOHN. No, I suppose not—now.

VAL. Everybody has been very kind. I confess I rather liked it. And oh, Jack, what do you think? Lord Sturley has proposed to Ethel Strangeways, and she has accepted him.

JOHN. So you've lost that!

VAL. Do you think I care?

JOHN. One never knows—women are so funny, when once another girl has accepted him. And, oh, I say, Ottoline Beaudesart would hardly speak to me all the evening.

VAL. I'm sorry for that. But never mind; you'll meet her again in the autumn. Where do you go?

JOHN [*wearily*]. I shall shoot a bit at Marchmont's, I suppose, and fool about at one or two of the meetings, but, really, I'm pretty indifferent. And you?

VAL. [*drearily*]. Homburg, I suppose, at first, and then Scotland; but, really, I take no interest.

JOHN. Poor little girl.

VAL. [*quickly*]. I pity you just as much.

JOHN. Why?

VAL. Oh, it's a stupid sort of existence we lead, isn't it?

JOHN [*gloomily*]. There isn't any other.

VAL. I don't know about that. At any rate there might have been an abominable kind of existence for me, if it were not for you, Jack. But now Lord Sturley is off my hands permanently, and it will take mamma some time to find a new match for me. Even old and fat like that, they are not so common.

JOHN. There will be an awful row when they find I'm a hoax.

VAL. Yes, there will. It's worse for you. It will give me a certain consequence to have jilted you, which will perhaps compensate in mamma's eyes.

JOHN. I can't say I quite like being jilted, Val. [*Puts arm across back of seat.*]

VAL. I knew you wouldn't. Let me be jilted—do! [*Faces him suddenly.*]

JOHN. No, no; I know of a better way. I have been thinking. Look here, Val, I talk a lot of nonsense, and I let people talk a great deal of nonsense about me. I pose—heaven only knows why—as a selfish, vain, heartless, cynical man. But I hope I am not such a bad sort after all. I can appreciate a sweet, natural, honest girl like you when I see her, and I think I can endure—by Jove, I should enjoy—the thought of domes-

ticity with you! Don't call me conceited, Valentia, but listen to what I propose—

VAL. [*softly*]. What do you propose?

JOHN [*laughing*]. I see I am being too deadly serious. Well, dear, I propose that, as we are engaged, we stay engaged and save trouble. Should you mind very much?

VAL. Mind! No, indeed, Jack! [*Archly.*] I was hoping you might take the hint.

JOHN. Valentia! [*Embraces her.*]

CURTAIN.

SHE KEPT THE GLOVE.

He saw her drop her glove,
And watched it where it lay;
He rushed to pick it up
When she had turned away;
He kissed and hid it in
A pocket near his heart,
Not knowing that the girl
But played a little part.

The preacher said the words
That made her his for life;
"Now give me back my glove,"
Implored his loving wife;
"I have the one that goes
With that I dropped for you—
I never wore them, and
They're still as good as new."

"THE NETTLE."

ERNEST WARREN.

Text and Stage-Business Edited and Revised
By PAULINE PHELPS and MARION SHORT.

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CHARACTERS: GUY CHARLTON.
DULCIE MEREDITH.

SCENE: A poorly-furnished room. Sewing-table and chair L. Chair C. facing toward sewing-table. Table R. with chairs either side of it. On table R. are piled in disorder newspapers, magazines, manuscript, writing-materials, etc. Dish cupboard L. against flat. Door C. in flat. Door R.

[N. B.—The part of GUY should be played by a tall muscularly built man.]

DISCOVERED: Empty stage. Shrill female voice is heard in distance, outside room.

VOICE [*screaming*]. Top o' the house—door on yer left!

GUY [*without*]. Thanks. Door on the left. [*Tapping.*] Any one in?

[*Renewed tapping. Then open door and enter* GUY CHARLTON—*young, fashionably dressed, and carries a heavy hunting whip.*]

GUY [*looks around*]. Top of the house, door on the left. This *must* be the place. [*Turns to table, takes up paper R.*] Ah! Here is the libelous sheet itself! The very number! [*Opens and reads.*] "Notable Noodles"—that's me! "Notable Noodles. —New Series, No. 1." "A Fool and His Money"—I *know* he

means me! Just because I gave a diamond bracelet to—. But, if I am a noodle, that's no reason why I should be told so in print. I'll horsewhip the fellow. That's what I'm here for. I'll beat him within an inch of his miserable life [*gives ferocious cut with whip. Looking at note-book, reading card.*] Mr. Tom Meredith! A—ah!! Very well, Mr. Meredith, here am I installed in your fourth-story castle, and when it pleases you to put in an appearance, I'll prove to you that if Notable Noodles have no brains, they have plenty of muscle. [*Business with whip; tucking up sleeves.*] Ah! there's a step on the stair! [*Opens door and listens.*] Past the first landing! Past the second!! Past the third!! Oho! He's coming to his sky parlor, is Mr. Tom Meredith. He'll meet with a warm reception. [*Business. Closes door and stands by it with half-raised horsewhip; door opens and enter* DULCIE, *singing to herself;* DULCIE *takes his hat from table and looks at it; he hides whip behind him and comes forward bowing.*] Beg pardon, thought it was somebody else, didn't know it was you—how d'ye do?

DULCIE [*looking him up and down and mimicking*]. Beg pardon—didn't know you were here—who *are* you?

GUY. I—I—was waiting—to—to see Mr.—Mr. [*referring to note-book*]—Mr. Meredith.

DUL. He's not at home. [*Takes off gloves.*] Is it business? Perhaps I shall do as well.

GUY [*hiding whip*]. Oh, no! oh, dear no! Not at all!

DUL. Is it anything about "The Nettle"? [*Crosses to table R. and takes up copy of paper.*]

GUY. "The Nettle?" Well—er—ah—yes. It is more or less connected with "The Nettle." The sting part of it at least.

DUL. Oh, I *am* so glad! What a pity Tom is out! You've read it! I know you've read it. I told Tom it was sure to make its mark. [*Waves folded paper over her head.*]

GUY. I can answer for the mark. I'm acquainted with him. But—but I won't intrude upon you. My visit was to *Mr.* Meredith. It can wait. Good morning. [*Aside.*] What a pretty

girl she is! I suppose she's his wife! [*Aloud, backing to door.*] No—no message, thank you. The communication I have to make is private and confidential. [*Business with whip.*] My business is personal, I assure you. Good morning. [*Bows and exit.*]

DUL. Good day. Who can he be? A nice young fellow and not bad looking. [*Takes off hat; begins to arrange sewing-material on table L.*] And he reads "The Nettle"!! Oh, I *am* so glad to have actually seen somebody who really reads "The Nettle." [*Sitting at table.*] What a pity Tom was out! How pleased they would have been to meet. And I never thought to ask him his name! How silly! Who *can* he be? Oh! ooh! ooh! How foolish of me! [*Jumps up, clasping hands agitatedly.*] *I* know! Why, of course, he is the *capitalist* Tom is always talking about, the gentleman worth thousands who is going to find Tom the money to start a newspaper! Oh, what an idiot I have been! I have let him go when all our future depends upon him. [*Going up to door; opens door and calls.*] Sir, Sirr, Sirrr! I forgot something!

GUY [*distant voice*]. Hullo! Are you calling me?

DUL. Please, sir, would you mind coming back?

GUY [*still distant*]. Certainly not, if you wish it.

DUL. *If* I wish it! We don't get capitalists up four pair of stairs every day. [*Crossing, putting paper on table.*] Why, he can make Tom's fortune and I was almost rude to him! What a nice fellow he is;—and clever, too, I should think. I will be just as agreeable as I possibly can, and keep him here till Tom returns. [*R. to L. Re-enter* GUY.] Oh, sir! I hope you don't mind my having called you back. [*Smiles ingratiatingly at him.*]

GUY. Oh, no! Oh, dear, no—not at all, I assure you.

DUL. I'm so very sorry Tom is out. He would be horribly disappointed to miss you. In fact, he has been expecting to hear from you.

GUY. Oh, he has, has he? Well, what was it you forgot?

DUL. [*confused*]. Why, I—I—I forget what I forgot, but never mind. Do take a seat! [*He sits a little awkwardly, and*

tries to hide whip; GUY, *L. C.;* DULCIE, *R. C.*] Let me take your umbrella. Oh, it isn't an umbrella! What *do* you carry this for in London? Isn't it what people go hunting with? You've not been hunting to-day, have you?

GUY. No—that is—well—er—a sort of hunting, you know—er—er—a paper-chase! [*Puts down whip on chair C.*]

DUL. Have you killed anything?

GUY [*airily*]. No—no—no. [*Aside, savagely.*] Not yet!

DUL. [*sitting at table and taking up work*]. *I am* so pleased you like "The Nettle." Isn't it clever?

GUY. Oh, yes—yes—of course—awfully!

DUL. And "Notable Noodles." Aren't they delicious?

GUY [*R.*]. Well—er—you know to *me* they seem to be rather personal. [*Aside.*] I mustn't lose sight of that whip.

DUL. Personal? Of course, they are! That's the beauty of them. But then, you know, *they're so true!*

GUY [*laughing hollowly*]. Ha, ha! Oh, yes—naturally—that *is* a merit—[*crossing*] they *are* so true—[*aside*] *so damned true!* When I was once on the other side of that door what ill-fortune ever induced me to return! [*Rises and begins to pace floor.*]

DUL. I am sure Tom only wants a little encouragement.

GUY. Yes—that's what Tom wants; I came here on purpose to give it him. [*Unobserved by her he shakes fist at imaginary Tom.*]

DUL. You did? Oh, how kind and good you are! Now, if some capitalist with literary tastes were to start a paper, and make Tom editor, at a good salary, don't you think—now truly—don't you think he would startle the world?

GUY [*sitting L. C.*]. Paralyze it—I should say.

DUL. Tom's so modest. That article you admire so much, "A Fool and His Money," do you know, he didn't think much of it.

GUY. Then, that's not one of Tom's supreme efforts?

DUL. Oh, no. He said he had done the best he could with a poor subject.

GUY [*aside*]. I wish I could change the subject. [*Aloud.*] I am sure he is very fortunate in having so able an assistant as yourself. Of course, you help him in his literary work?

DUL. I? Oh, no, I am not clever enough for that. I just pick out funny names for Noodles like ninnis and mutton-head, you know.

GUY. Quite a model wife for Noodles' traducer.

DUL. [*rising*]. Sir!

GUY. Beg pardon, I'm sure. I thought you were married!

DUL. I am his sister.

GUY [*jumping up*]. His sister? Accept my congratulations.

DUL. Why?

GUY. Well—er—[*confused*]. Why—don't you see—if you're not his wife, you can be some other fellow's wife?

DUL. [*reflectively*]. Ye-e-s, *that is* an advantage. But no—no—I *can't* marry—I shall *never* marry—unless—until—[*puts down work, sitting*].

GUY. Yes? Unless? Until?

DUL. I can never leave Tom, never.

GUY [*kneeling on chair, L.*]. Is he such a terrible ogre? Does he keep you chained, his prisoner and his slave?

DUL. [*indignantly; rising*]. Tom is everything that is nice, and good, and honorable, and kind, and affectionate, and there's not another man in the whole wide world to compare with him, and anyone who says a word against him is wicked, and cruel and malicious—and—and—I don't like him.

GUY [*goes to her*]. There, there! Don't be angry. I'm sure he's everything you say—but he *does* write spitefully, you know, even granting that Noodle is a noodle.

DUL. *That's* his profession—to be good and tender is his nature.

GUY. Then why does he outrage nature! [*Pause.*]

DUL. [*lays down work*]. I want you to have a good opinion of Tom. You would if you only knew of what sacrifices he is

capable. When our father died, we found ourselves, my brother and I, almost penniless, we who had been brought up to play—not to work—and [*mysteriously*] Tom was in love!! Terribly, awfully, desperately in love! I suppose you don't know what that means?

GUY. I should like to be taught. [*Leans over table towards her.*]

DUL. But the lady he loved was poor.

GUY. The ladies we love always are.

DUL. So Tom went to her and told her his first duty was to his sister, and that, dearly as he loved her, their marriage must be postponed for a time. But I did not know he had done this till long afterward. Then he brought me with him to the city, and he worked, worked, worked, never resting. He set himself the task to make a home for me before he offered one to her who was dearer to him even than I.

GUY. Then he's not such a bad sort.

DUL. [*rises*]: There isn't another man like him. Ah! you don't know how hard the struggle was at first, how unceasing his effort, how unvarying the disappointment. Brains are not in demand in the London market. [*Taking paper.*] We were almost despairing when "The Nettle" started and Tom was fortunate enough to obtain an engagement on the staff. Tom hit upon his idea of—

GUY. Yes, yes, I know. Newspaper soup made of noodles.

DUL. And the proprietor raised his salary. Oh, those dear, dear Noodles! I don't know what we should have done but for them. You see we are able to live quite grandly now! and—oh, I beg your pardon for being so inhospitable—may I offer you a cup of tea? Tom is *sure* to be in directly. *Do* have a cup of tea.

GUY. Thanks. I *will* take a cup of Tom! I mean—tea.

DUL. Excuse me a minute. The cups are in the kitchen. We call it the kitchen, but it's only a cupboard and a spirit-lamp! When Tom has a paper of his own, I shall be able to entertain

you better. [*At door R.*] I shan't be long. You can amuse yourself with the back numbers of——

GUY. Stale noodles, as it were. Thanks, I know.

DUL. I shan't be long. [*Exit.*]

GUY. A nice mess I've got myself into! Coming here to horsewhip a man and *half* falling in love with his pretty sister. What a jolly little girl she is! and to think that she and her brother —oh, confound her brother, the pen-and-ink assassin—the—but after all he *is* her brother—she can't help *that!* How deuced awkward it will be if he comes in while I am drinking tea with her. I can't put down the cup and take up the whip. No—there's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the whip. But if I don't chastise him, what is my business in this room? Unless I immediately proceed to castigate him, I am an unwarrantable intruder on his domestic peace! Oh, I must thrash him or he'll turn me out of doors as an interloper! But it's awkward—deuced awkward! [*Re-enter* DULCIE *with cups, etc., on tray.*] Permit me to assist you, Miss Meredith. [*Goes to meet her and takes hold of one side of tray.*]

DUL. Oh, no! I couldn't think of troubling you! [*They stand holding tray between them and looking at each other sentimentally.*] Please let me put it down, Mr.—Mr.—oh you never told me your name!

GUY. My *friends*—call me—Guy!

DUL. Oh! I couldn't do that! Mr.—Mr.—You—

GUY. No—no—of course, not—not all at once—but when you know me better—in a quarter of an hour—or ten minutes—or five—eh? What do your friends call *you?*

DUL. Tom calls me—Dulcie.

GUY [*moves hands round tray till they touch hers*]. Dulcie! What a sweet name!

DUL. Oh, take care! See, you have upset the sugar! [*She takes tray, puts it on table R., pours out tea.*]

GUY. Tom is a lucky fellow to have such a jolly little housekeeper. I haven't got a sister. [*Sighing.*]

DUL. [*sighing*]. Haven't you? And yet they are awfully numerous. I'm too numerous for Tom's good.

GUY [*at table, sitting*]. I think Tom's in luck.

DUL. Let me give you some tea [*hands cup*].

GUY. Ah! [*Sipping tea.*] This is very sweet!

DUL. Too sweet? [*Leans forward anxiously.*]

GUY [*meeting her eyes*]. How blue your eyes are—like bits of June sky! [*Nervously tastes tea.*] No, no—not at all *too* sweet. I hope Tom won't hurry home on *my* account.

DUL. Oh, no—I hope not—that is, I mean—I hope he won't neglect his business to get back.

GUY [*sentimentally*]. And you say he was desperately in love? [*Abstractly helps his cup to sugar repeatedly.*]

DUL. Awfully. [*Confusedly puts sugar into his cup as she talks.*] Oh, but she *is* so nice, and so devoted to him. But, then, of course, everybody likes Tom. Do you know, I think the reason you and I get on so well together, is because we are both so fond of Tom. [*Sips her tea.*]

GUY [*puts down teacup*]. Eh?—I?—oh, yes—yes—of course—capital fellow, I daresay, when you know him. I say, Dulcie, there's *nobody*, is there?—that you like as he likes—*somebody?*

DUL. Oh, no!

GUY. Nobody who's very fond of you? [*Extends cup.*] More sugar, please.

DUL. [*helping his cup to sugar again*]. Oh, no! At least I—I think not—unless it is the curate.

GUY. There always *is* a curate.

DUL. But that was a year ago.

GUY [*gloomily, leaning over table*]. Supposing he were here, now, as I am, sitting in this very chair, as I am, looking at you, as I do—supposing he were to say—

DUL. [*rising, interrupting*]. I *must* put away the tea-things before Tom comes home. [*Jumps up and clatters cups and saucers.*]

GUY [*jumping up*]. And I must help you. I feel so jolly domestic helping you. Where do they go? [*He takes a saucer, she a cup. They cross to cupboard.*]

DUL. There's another cup and saucer, will you fetch them, please? [*She puts up cup and saucer*—GUY *crosses to table.*]

GUY. Certainly, with pleasure. Oh, what a never-ending dream of bliss this life would be, could one but go on fetching cups and saucers till the end of time. How charming she is! How delicious! What hair! What eyes! What lips! If I only had the courage! [*Flourishes cup and saucer all through speech.*]

DUL. When you've quite done with that cup and saucer!

GUY. Beg pardon. [*Recovering himself, hands it to her.*]

DUL. Why do you look at me so?

GUY. O, Dulcie! [*Suddenly and impulsively kisses her cheek.*]

DUL. How dare you! How dare you! [*Crosses to extreme R.*] I thought you were a friend of Tom's—and a gentleman!

GUY [*at extreme L.*]. I—I really couldn't help it. I am very sorry if I have offended you.

DUL. What's the good of being sorry when you've done it? [*Folds arms, taps foot angrily.*]

GUY. It's more satisfactory than being sorry that you haven't done it. After all, what *is* a kiss? It's not an uncommon thing.

DUL. No, I daresay you bestow one on every girl you meet.

GUY. Oh, no—no—I assure you. Indeed, I do not. They won't let me.

DUL. I think you've taken an unwarrantable liberty.

GUY. I think you've taken unnecessary offence.

DUL. This is *my* room, and I shall take what I like in it.

GUY. Then take me!

DUL. I *do* take you—for a noodle.

GUY. Why are you rude? [*Approaches C.*]

DUL. I'm not. You've no right to say so. I hate people who quarrel. [*Approaches C.*]

GUY. You began it. [*Faces her.*]

DUL. That's right! Say it was my fault. [*Faces him saucily.*]

GUY. So it was.

DUL. It wasn't—it wasn't—it wasn't! [*Bobs head vigorously.*]

GUY. Well, then—it wasn't—it wasn't—it wasn't! [*Bobs also.*]

DUL. You shan't say what I say—you know you don't mean it, and you only agree with me to tease me. I wish I had never made tea for you, I wish you had never come here, I wish I had never seen you—there! [*Goes up to cupboard, turning back on him.*]

GUY. I am sorry to have offended you—very sorry. [*At door.*] Good afternoon, Miss Meredith. [*Louder.*] Good afternoon, Miss Meredith. [*Aside.*] She looks prettier than ever with that pout upon her lips. [*Aloud, savagely.*] Good day! [*Exit, slamming door.*]

DUL. [*starting and looking round*]. Has he gone? Really, really gone? [*Whimpering.*] I hate men. They're horrid! What right had he to kiss me and make me cross? I—I—didn't mean to be cross—and—and, after all—he didn't kiss me much. I shall never see him again, never! [*Sitting on chair.*] And he was so nice and pleasant, till he was so bold and disagreeable! Perhaps he'll come back. I'm sure he wants to see—Tom. Oh, dear, oh, dear! What *have* I done? [*Springs up excitedly.*] Perhaps ruined Tom's prospects for life! I've driven away The Capitalist. I forgot all about his being a capitalist. I wonder if he has really gone. [*Runs to door and looks out.*] Oh, what shall I do? What *shall* I do? [*Sitting at table, R.*] I—I—think I could almost have forgiven him if I had stopped to think it over. It wasn't a full grown kiss, anyhow—just a sort of three-quarter one. And now Tom will have to go on drudging, drudging—and it is all *my* fault. I am the most miserable girl in all the

world, and—and I wish—I wish I were dead. [*Sobbing.*] He'll never come back. Oh, how I wish he would come back—because of Tom—only for Tom's sake. [*Hides her face in her hands. Door slowly opens and re-enter* GUY, *humble and submissive; she pretends not to see him.*] Only for Tom's sake.

GUY [*apologetically*]. I beg your pardon.

DUL. [*with a cry of pleasure*]. Oh! [*Rising and crossing, L., is going toward him, then suddenly remembers, and becomes prim and starched.*] My brother has not yet returned, sir.

GUY. Very sorry to interrupt again, but—but—the fact is, it is raining—raining fast—so—so—I thought I would come back for—for—my whip. Don't like to get wet, you know.

DUL. [*eagerly*]. Let me look for it. [*Business; both pretend to look for whip.*] I'm so sorry I mislaid it. How silly not to remember where I put it! I'll find it directly. I won't keep you a minute.

GUY. Don't trouble yourself, Miss Meredith. It's of no consequence! [*Aside.*] She hasn't forgiven me. I hoped she might.

[*Both pretend looking for whip on opposite sides of room, but gradually approach each other.*]

DUL. [*aside*]. How cold and distant he is! I think I liked him the other way best. [*When close side by side both stoop simultaneously and pick up whip between them.*] Oh! *Here* it is! [*They drop it again.*]

GUY [*nervous laugh*]. Yes, there it is!

DUL. It fell down!

GUY. Yes. It toppled over!

BOTH. I'll get it. [*They stoop and bump heads.*]

BOTH. I beg your pardon. [*They pick up whip between them, she takes it and dusts it with her skirt.*]

GUY. If you forgive me, shake hands.

DUL. Hm? [*Turns away head and holds whip toward him. He shakes it vigorously, then discovers mistake and grabs her hand instead, flinging whip across room.*]

GUY. I could not be content till I heard from your own lips that I was forgiven.

DUL. I—I—am afraid I was rather hasty. Fancy my quarreling with Tom's best friend!

GUY. Eh?

DUL. When I ought to like you so very much for all your kind intentions to him.

GUY. Eh? My kind intentions to Tom! Oh, yes!—yes—of course—but—er—are you sure you don't mistake my intentions?

DUL. [*cheerfully*]. Oh, no! You're *The Capitalist!*

GUY. The—I beg your pardon—the WHAT?

DUL. The Capitalist, the gentleman who is going to find the money for Tom to start a paper of his own. He has often talked to me about you, and you don't know how kind I think it of you to help him. You are a true friend to us both, and—

GUY [*interrupting*]. Yes—yes—I am delighted to be *your* friend—proud, I assure you—but—but I fear there is a mistake somewhere.

DUL. A mistake?

GUY. Well, you see you give me credit for what I don't quite deserve. You—you—slightly overestimate the good nature of my visit— [*Sits L.*]

DUL. You are *not* a capitalist? [*Sits R.*]

GUY. Well, I—I—don't know. I've plenty of money—but I certainly did not come here with the intention of sharing it with your brother! My errand was of quite a different nature.

DUL. [*groaning*]. Oooh!

GUY [*sighing*]. Aaah!

DUL. Then—then, sir—if—if you are not The Capitalist, who are you? [*Both rise.*]

GUY. I'll explain later. [*Backing to door.*] I'll call again—to-morrow—or next day—or next year. [*Goes to door.*]

DUL. But, at least, let me know who it is that has called to see—my brother.

GUY [*aside*]. There's no escape for me! [*Aloud.*] Of course, you read "Notable Noodles!"

DUL. Of course, I love Notable Noodles!

GUY [*aside*]. Is that a compliment, or is it not? [*Aloud.*] And you are doubtless in your brother's confidence?

DUL. He keeps nothing secret from me.

GUY [*aside*]. It *must* come out! [*Aloud.*] You know, then, the real name of those—Noodles—whom he scorches, flays, and withers with his scathing sarcasm? You know the hero referred to in No. 1 of the New Series?

DUL. Of course, I do and I abominate him.

GUY [*aside*]. Of course, she does! And she abominates me. [*Drops into chair, groaning.*]

DUL. Yes, there can be no doubt about that. Every one *must* see it is Sir Bilberry Boodle!

GUY [*rising*]. Eh? *What*? I beg pardon. Who?

DUL. Sir Bilberry Boodle! Why, didn't you know that?

GUY [*crosses R., laughing wildly*]. Of course, *of course, of course!* How stupid of me! Fits him to a T. Uncommonly clever! Ha, ha, ha! Notable Noodle, Sir Bilberry Boodle—Sir Bilberry Boodle, Notable Noodle! Quite a poem, isn't it? "A Fool and His Money"—First-rate! Capital! Why that's Boodle all over. Do you know I thought it was meant for—for somebody else? Poor old Boodle! but he deserves it. Miss Meredith, you did me the honor to ask me my name; Guy Charlton, Miss Meredith, Guy Charlton. [*Anxiously.*] You never heard your brother mention *me,* did you?

DUL. Never!

GUY [*aside*]. What a relief! [*Aloud.*] Yes, Miss Meredith, Guy Charlton, very much at your service, very much at your brother's service. Um—err—[*picks up whip*], present him this whip with my compliments. Might come in handy in case of a call from a stray noodle, you know. Is there anything I can do for you, Miss Meredith? Will you allow me to help you?

DUL. [*bustling about*]. No, thank you, Mr. Charlton. I have nothing to do now but look over this manuscript for Tom.

GUY. Allow me to look over it with you.

[*They sit side by side at table, manuscript spread out before them.*]

GUY. This is jolly, isn't it. [*They move chairs close together.*]

DUL. Two people can look so much better than one—can't they?

GUY [*sentimentally*]. Two people can do no end of things better than one, can't they? Waltz—or quarrel—or—or—or—or—make love—well, of course, no fellow can make love by himself—or—or—marry—there must be two people to marry, you know.

DUL. I believe two *is* the proper number.

GUY. I say, Miss Meredith—Dulcie—were you really—I mean—*really and truly—very* angry when I—you know—[*touches her cheek gingerly with one finger*].

DUL. It is not what I have been accustomed to, Mr. Charlton.

GUY. Glad to hear that. I—I—suppose if I were to do it again we shouldn't be friends any more? [*He takes up several sheets of manuscript and tears them up absently.*]

DUL. People don't do that sort of thing unless they are related, or are very fond of each other [*she tears up remaining sheets*] or—or engaged—or something.

GUY [*putting his arm round her*]. But, Dulcie, I *am* very fond of you—I love you with all my heart—and as for being engaged, that rests with you. You don't know very much about me, but then I don't know very much about you—so that makes it equal. I only know I have never met a girl whom I would sooner call my wife, so if you will promise—

DUL. [*interrupting him*]. No, no, no. It is impossible! How could I leave Tom to fight his battles unaided—and alone?

GUY. Dulcie, if your only scruples are for your brother's sake, *I* will find Tom the capital to start a paper.

DUL. Oh, then, you *did* come here to do something for him?

GUY. Yes—that is—yes, I did call to give him something. But never mind that. Tom shall have a paper of his own. I shouldn't wonder if it made a hit. The way he gave it to poor old Boodle was capital—splendid! Tom's a clever fellow. Then, you see, he can marry—you know men are so selfish—*then* he won't want you—and *I shall.* He can do without you—and *I can't.*

DUL. Oh, Guy! And will you do all this for Tom?

GUY. No, Dulcie, *not* for Tom—for *you,* my darling.

DUL. You may kiss me again, Guy—a full-grown one.

[*Sitting side by side they embrace and he kisses her repeatedly.*]

CURTAIN.

PO' LITTLE LAMB

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR.

Bedtime's come fu' little boys,
Po' little lamb.
Too tiahed out to make a noise,
Po' little lamb.
You gwine t' have to-morrer sho'?
Yes, you tole me dat befo',
Don't you fool me, chile, no mo',
Po' little lamb.

You been bad de livelong day,
Po' little lamb.
Th'owin' stones an' runnin' 'way,
Po' little lamb.

My, but you's a-runnin' wild,
Look jes' lak some po' folks' chile;
Mam' gwine whup you atter while,
Po' little lamb.

Come hyeah! you mos' tiahed to def,
Po' little lamb.
Played yo'se'f clean out o' bref,
Po' little lamb.
See dem han's now—sich a sight!
Would you evah b'lieve dey's white!
Stan' still 'twell I wash dem right,
Po' little lamb.

Jes' can't hol' yo' haid up straight,
Po' little lamb.
Hadn't oughter played so late,
Po' little lamb.
Mammy do' know whut she'd do,
Ef de chillun's all lak you;
You's a caution now fu' true,
Po' little lamb.

Lay yo' haid down in my lap,
Po' little lamb.
Y'ought to have a right good slap,
Po' little lamb.
You been runnin' roun' a heap.
Shet dem eyes an' don't you peep,
Dah now, dah now, go to sleep,
Po' little lamb.

HE, SHE AND IT.

WILLIAM MUSKERRY.

Text and Stage-Business Edited and Revised
By PAULINE PHELPS and MARION SHORT.

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CHARACTERS: HE.
SHE.
IT (in the cradle).

SCENE: Her boudoir. Door L. Door R. with portière. Two easy-chairs before fireplace L. Sofa R. Small toilet-table R., with decanter, siphon, and glass. Clock on mantelpiece L. Newspaper on mantelshelf. SHE discovered sitting by fire, rocking cradle supposed to contain IT, while her hands are occupied knitting feverishly. SHE looks impatiently at clock.

NOTE: SHE should be represented not only with unflagging volubility, but also with constant variations of tone and expression; while HE should be acted in eloquent but natural pantomime, indicating by action the words HE would, but is not allowed to utter. Care must, however, be taken not to overdo this, and particularly to avoid creating the impression that the character is dumb.

SHE. Eleven o'clock [*pause*], two seconds past, and this on the first anniversary of our wedding-day! I can't stand it any longer. Even if he has ceased to care for me he might have some consideration for our innocent babe. [*To* IT] When he *does* come in, and wants to go to sleep, I'd wake up, if I were

you, and cry all night! It would be a judgment on him. [*Door L. opens gradually.*] Ah, here he is at last! [*Turns her back, rocking cradle, and knitting furiously.*]

[HE *enters quickly, L., and approaches his wife.* SHE *takes no notice.* HE *pauses, astonished. Looks anxiously at her, then smiling, and going gently behind her, makes a movement as though about to kiss her.*]

SHE [*rising, and giving him a look of withering contempt*]. Sir!

HE [*makes a step toward her*].

SHE. How *dare* you! [*Holds herself in tense attitude, fists clenched.*]

HE [*about to embrace her*].

SHE [*recoiling*]. No familiarities before our innocent offspring! [*Puts cradle back a little.*]

HE [*lays his hand upon her arm*].

SHE [*shaking it off*]. Unhand me, sir! [*Crosses to R.*]

HE [*follows her with gesture of astonishment*].

SHE [*with her hand on the door-handle—solemnly*]. All is now over between us, sir, forever! [*Exits R. H. D.*]

[HE *springs after her. The door is slammed in his face.* HE, *alone, stands aghast and asks himself what can be the matter. It occurs to him* SHE *is probably only joking.* HE *puts his eye and ear to keyhole alternately, but neither seeing nor hearing anything, shakes head in perplexity. The matter is evidently becoming serious, and as if to prepare himself against a coming storm* HE *braces himself up, crosses to fireplace, and warms hands energetically; then, taking newspaper, throws himself into easy-chair, puts up feet, and pretends to read with an air of studied indifference.*]

SHE [*re-enters, R., and plants herself in front of him*]. Things cannot go on like this any longer. [HE *looks up at her over top of newspaper with surprise.*] If you flatter yourself that, after leaving me to wait up for you all the evening, I am going tamely to submit to sit down and watch you reading. [*Folds her arms aggressively.*]

HE [*about to rise and offer her his seat*].

SHE [*ironically*]. Oh, pray, don't get up. I should be sorry to disturb you. I quite understand that after being out half the day amusing yourself you naturally require a little repose.

HE [*nods in assent, falls back in chair, yawns and stretches himself*].

SHE [*tremulously*]. I am only sorry I did not go to bed and take baby with me; I would have done it, too, if I had known you would not be in until after midnight. [*Kneels, looking into cradle.*]

HE [*points to clock, which only indicates eleven*].

SHE. It is nothing of the sort! That clock is always an hour slow. It is half-past twelve, at least, by now. [*Rises.*]

HE [*takes out watch, smiles, and shakes head*].

SHE. Don't do that; it only irritates me. [*Stamps at him and walks away.*]

HE [*replaces watch and turns face of clock to wall*].

SHE. Oh! I understand; time is no object to you. One o'clock—two o'clock—three o'clock—it is all the same to you. Why didn't you stay out until six in the morning while you were about it? No wonder you're ashamed to look a clock in the face.

HE [*about to protest*].

SHE. Of course, it never occurred to you that it was just twelve months ago to-day we were married? [*Turns clock around again.*]

HE [*nods affirmatively*].

SHE. It is no use your wagging your head at me like a Chinese mandarin. You know the idea never entered it. I'm only surprised that you condescended to come home at all! [*Laughs satirically.*]

HE [*rumples his hair up in desperation*].

SHE. It is no wonder you've got a headache. You've been enjoying yourself, I suppose.

HE [*laughs quietly*].

SHE. It is all very well to laugh now, but I know what a state you'll be in, in the morning.

HE [*opens his mouth, about to protest*].

SHE. No, sir! not another word! You always think you can talk me out of everything. I can guess where you've been, so it's not worth your while inventing any stories about club dinners, or Board meetings, or scientific associations. I dare say you've been carrying on as usual—gallivanting!

HE [*rises thunderstruck*].

SHE. Then there *were* women there. Where? Wherever you've been. Pretty women, I suppose you call them—pah! Frights I pronounce them.

HE [*drops back into chair, horrified*].

SHE. You see, I know all about it. Quite overcome to find that out, aren't you? It was a political banquet, I suppose. All respectable mugwumps, with a Bishop in the chair, and none but married men admitted, and no females—of course, not; I daresay you were the life and soul of the party—such as it was!

HE [*lights cigarette, shrugs shoulders, and crosses R.*].

SHE. Wasn't it amusing? That *is* a pity, and you such a favorite, too, in society.

HE [*makes a gesture of deprecation*].

SHE. At least, I've been told so. I can't say I find you very entertaining at home, but I presume you only put on your company manners, like your dress coat, when you are going out. And you are good looking. But, beware! Your handsome face may yet prove your downfall!

HE [*advances toward her, smiling*].

SHE [*retreating*]. No, sir, no; not before the child! Reserve your blandishments for those who appreciate them.

HE [*endeavors to protest*].

SHE. Oh! I tell you, you cannot deceive me. I know the style of woman you admire. A forward, slangy, horsey young person like Miss Desborough.

HE [*appears to repeat the name to himself in astonishment*].

SHE. Yes, Miss Desborough! And the creature actually had the assurance to call on me yesterday. At your instigation, no doubt. Her hat was simply shameless.

HE [*shakes his head*].

SHE. Oh, don't put down that vile cigarette to talk to me about the Desboroughs being fine people, and such old friends and neighbors of yours, when you know the girl's mother was a nobody. [HE *gives a start of astonishment.*] Yes, sir, a nobody! Everyone knows that her mother was only a dancing woman when that silly old Desborough married her.

HE [*taps back of chair impatiently*].

SHE. Well, a professor of dancing, it's the same thing. Gave lessons in the waltz, the two-step, the schottische, the minuet. This sort of thing—got her living by it [*taking up her robe and rapidly imitating various steps named*]. She might have been in the ballet for all I know.

HE [*makes a gesture of incredulity*].

SHE. Oh, don't try to deny it! You men are so weak that any woman can wind you round her little finger—and so, it's for the pleasure of *her* society you are always so willing to forsake me—and IT [*pointing tragically to cradle*].

HE [*finding it impossible to get in a word, crosses to fireplace*].

SHE. Yes, that's right—fly in a passion and shout.

HE [*resumes his seat in quiet resignation*].

SHE. Do anything, but don't sulk [*stamping*]. There's nothing I despise or abominate so much as a man who sulks.

HE [*wheels chair round to fire and turns back to her, and shrugs shoulders*].

SHE. Oh! if you are not going to speak to me, the best thing you can do is to go out and get a judicial separation.

HE [*turns head and looks at her over chair with astonishment*].

SHE. It is no use answering me back, because you've nothing to say, and you know it.

HE [*shakes head and sighs*].

SHE. What have I ever done? [*Pathetically.*] I'll challenge you to go back through the whole year of our married existence and tell me if you can find one solitary instance in which I have failed in my duty toward you—[*violently*] never, sir! never! never once!!! And now, now, to all your abuse I answer not a word!

HE [*rises impetuously*].

SHE. Hush! would you awake our sleeping babe?

HE [*goes gently toward cradle*].

SHE [*rushing between them*]. Beat me! Strike me, if you will, but you shall not lay a finger on our child!

HE [*raises his arm to intercept her*].

SHE. Coward! Would you raise your hand against a woman? Oh, crowning degradation!

HE [*stands aghast*].

SHE. Strike! I am ready. [*Spreads out arms receptively.*]

HE [*puts hands in pockets and looks at her*].

SHE. Well, why don't you? I am prepared for the worst. Oh, don't be afraid. I shall not defend myself. [*Same gesture.*]

HE [*turns on heel, and is looking toward door L*].

SHE [*bitterly*]. Ah, how like a man! You haven't even the courage of your conviction. You strike mentally, but dare not strike physically.

HE [*pauses at the door*].

SHE. I suppose you wish to avoid a scene on account of the servants. You are very considerate for everyone—but me.

HE [*looks at her coldly and retraces steps*].

SHE. Do you hear what I say? [*Grabs him by shoulders and screams in his ear.*]

HE [*pretends not to hear her, and taking up newspaper, sits down before fire*].

SHE. That's right, I'd hide my face if I were you, and pretend to read the paper. Some men would have the manliness to say something, seeing a woman—a wife—a mother—sad, wretched, driven almost to despair—would try to reason with her with

a gentle word, a friendly gesture, or a look of kindness. Is it so very hard to show a little sympathy for the woman who loves you? [*Sinks into chair, hands clasped over knee.*]

HE [*somewhat moved, lets paper fall to floor*].

SHE. And, after all, what I ask you is only to tell me everywhere you have been, and everything you have done since this morning, beginning with the worst things first.

HE [*somewhat surprised*].

SHE. Only that and nothing more, and to admit it is not quite the thing to come home at midnight. [*Rises.*]

HE [*on point of replying*].

SHE. Well, if the clock was wrong, it was very near it, and it must have been the last train but one when you left town, and what you were doing there at all is a mystery. [*Paces floor.*]

HE [*tries once more to speak*].

SHE [*preventing him*]. And you *won't* give me an answer. [*Bursts into tears and falls on sofa, sobbing.*]

HE [*looks at her pityingly*].

SHE [*sobbing*]. Mother—mother, if you could only look in on me and see me now! You'd start straight home again.

HE [*rises in despair*].

SHE. And to think that this is only the beginning of my misery!

HE [*approaches her and lays hand gently on her shoulder*].

SHE [*repulses him*]. Don't touch me! Don't come near me! I will not listen to your hypocritical excuses. You wish to break my heart—well, you've broken it. I hope you're pleased with the result. [*Becomes hysterical.*]

HE [*losing all patience, leaves her abruptly and strides up and down the room*].

SHE. Oh, I dare say I've made myself very ridiculous. I've no reason to complain. I dare say I shall be used to this sort of thing directly. Other women have been neglected by their husbands and lived happily forever afterward; but I'm of too sensitive a nature. Ah! my poor dear Aunt Louisa often told me how it would be. The Aunt Louisa you hated.

HE [*standing near fireplace, with back to audience, turns at last word*].

SHE. Yes. Aunt Louisa knew everybody and everything—only too well!—and she said to me, many and many a time, when talking about you—"Mark my words, he's not all he seems. Some day he will break your heart."

HE [*showing signs of increasing anger, and at word "break" impatiently snaps paper-knife he has taken from mantelshelf*].

SHE. And now you've broken her paper-knife. Aunt Louisa was a prophet! She said you had brutal instincts.

HE [*throws down paper-knife angrily. Going to dressing-table, pours out glass of water from siphon*].

SHE. I must beg you not to turn my dressing-room into a drinking-bar. Only yesterday you let some drops fall on the sofa cushion—my dear mother's work.

HE [*gives a look of polite regret, pours out another glass, adding brandy from decanter*].

SHE. It's brandy and soda now! My cup of bitterness is filled to overflowing. [HE *crosses to sofa impatiently.*] And now you've gone and slopped it over my mother's cushion again. Not content with running down my Aunt Louisa, you would actually vent your rage on mother's cushion.

HE [*raises hand above head in astonishment*].

SHE. Don't dare to appeal to Heaven like that—it only adds to your profanity, and what harm did a hapless cushion ever do to you?

HE [*drops arm in despair*].

SHE. And now you're swearing—actually swearing—it's no use denying it; I *saw* you do it! But what could I expect of a man who would deliberately select this day of all days in the year to make me miserable—but, of course, you've quite forgotten *what* day it is. [*Turns her wedding-ring on finger.*]

HE [*tries to speak*].

SHE. Don't make matters worse by denying it; don't condescend to falsehood; don't prevaricate! [*Raises hands aloft, palms out.*]

HE [*looks at audience, as if to take them into his confidence, puts hand into his pocket, and turns smilingly toward her.*]

SHE. Well, what is it? Why don't you speak?

HE [*producing velvet jewel-case and baby's rattle*].

SHE [*taking case and opening it*]. A bracelet, with an inscription! [*Reads.*] "To my dear wife, on the first anniversary of our wedding-day." For me! And so it was all for me you went to town?

HE [*gently places rattle in cradle*].

SHE. And for baby, too? [*falling on neck and embracing him rapturously*]. Oh, you dear, darling old hubby, how good of you, and how I love you. And I always knew Aunt Louisa was a catty old maid, and I've wondered all the evening how I was ever lucky enough to capture you in the first place. [*Embraces him rapturously.*]

CURTAIN.

MEDITATIONS OF JOHNNY.

S. E. KISER.

I wisht 'at I was bigger, so when I go to play
With older boys they wouldn't try to order me away,
An' nen they wouldn't always make me set up on the fence,
When they are playin' circus, an' be the audy-ence.

I'd like to git into the ring, an' play I was the clown,
Or else the bareback rider, who goes jumpin' up and down,
Or I'd like to be the ringmaster—wouldn't that be just immense!
But ev'ry time they make me play 'at I'm the audy-ence.

When I get bigger some day I'm goin' to have a ring
An' be the lofty tumbler, an' clown, an' ev'rything,
An' then the littler boys'll have to set up on the fence
An' clap their hands when I perform an' be the audy-ence.

A YOUNG SOUBRETTE.

JOE CONE.

I fell in love with a gay soubrette,
And she fell in love with me;
At least, so she said, but objected to wed,
"Because I'm too young," said she.
I followed the show from town to town,
And sat in the baldheaded row,
And waited in fear for fully a year
For my little soubrette to grow.

I covered her fingers with costly rings,
I dined her in lavish style;
Till at length I became fatigued of the game
When I saw the low state of my pile.
The night I proposed, I ne'er can forget!
She kicked the hat off from my head;
And my love it did smother, for she was the mother
Of the leading lady, they said!

ONE SECRET SHE KEPT.

MARY S. ANTHONY.
(Sister of Susan B. Anthony.)

A man refused to tell his wife the outcome of a business transaction in which she took a deep interest.

HE—No, I won't tell you. If I did, you'd repeat it. You women can never keep a secret.

SHE—John, have I ever told the secret about the solitaire engagament-ring you gave me eighteen years ago being paste?

A MORNING CALL.

CHARLES DANCE.

Text and Stage-Business Edited and Revised
By PAULINE PHELPS and MARION SHORT.

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CHARACTERS: SIR EDWARD ARDENT.
MRS. CHILLINGTONE.

SCENE: A well-furnished drawing-room in Mrs. Chillingtone's country house. MRS CHILLINGTONE discovered working, her work-table being near the fire.

MRS. CHILLINGTONE. Now let me look at this note once again [*putting down her work, taking up note and reading*].

"MY DEAR FANNY;—I am sorry, for my own sake, that you declined to join the large and merry party who are now staying here—not so for yours—for there is a plot against you, and I am fortunately enabled to put you on your guard. Never mind how I came to know it—it is enough that I did not particularly listen, only—when gentlemen are on visits at country houses, they should ascertain exactly how their rooms are situated, before they talk too loud. I need not tell you, that it is well known that your early marriage was a forced one. It is, now, equally a matter of notoriety that you mistrust the whole of the opposite, or, as you call them, the 'opposing' sex, and that you have resolved never to marry again. I quite differ from you on this point, but never mind that—the subject was canvassed, a heavy wager was laid that you would break your resolution within a week; and your appointed conqueror is Sir Edward Ardent. As your house is but a few miles from this, and as he has but little time to spare, if he really means to win, I should not wonder if he were to ride over

this very day, and make a morning call." [*Speaking.*] Indeed! "He has the reputation of making great professions to every handsome woman he meets, without coming to the point with any; but you know him better than I do." [*Speaking*] Yes, I know him. "He's a good-looking, good-for-nothing, fascinating fellow, and that's the truth; I only wish he would make love to me." [*Speaking*] No doubt, my dear. "However, I believe he is in very safe hands with you." [*Speaking*] So do I. "Take care of yourself, and make an example of him for the sake of our sex in general, and of yours, dear Fanny, in particular. CHARLOTTE." Sir Edward Ardent, indeed! What impertinence! And I'm to surrender in less than a week, am I? Well, we'll see about that [*crumpling letter angrily in her hand*]. And to think that I almost fancied the man! Well, it isn't worth thinking of, and I don't care a pin about it. I'm really only too glad of a chance to teach him a lesson. Ugh! [*Shivers.*] How cold it is! I hope the renowned lady-killer will begin his attack soon; a little bit of a skirmish might warm one, for positively the fire won't. [*Rings bell and pokes fire.*]

[*Enter* SIR EDWARD ARDENT, *in hunting dress.*]

SIR E. [*aside*]. The snow puts an extinguisher on our hunting to-day, and some amusement I must have, so I have come to try if I can win the widow, *and* my bet. [*She rings a second time.*] She rings again—what does she want, I wonder?

MRS. C. Coals.

SIR E. Ma'am?

MRS. C. Coals.

SIR E. Coals?

MRS. C. [*looking up*]. Dear me, Sir Edward Ardent, I declare, I beg your pardon, I took you for my servant.

SIR E. Would that you would *keep* me for your servant!

MRS. C. What wages do you ask?

SIR E. I'll serve you for love. [*Comes close to her.*]

MRS. C. You'll never get paid. [*Starts away from him.*]

SIR E. Engage me, and I'll take my chance.

MRS. C. You have great confidence. [*Starts around table.*]

SIR E. Not too much. [*He follows her.*]

MRS. C. Yes you have—in *yourself*, I mean.

SIR E. Never mind, engage me?

MRS. C. I've heard a bad character of you from your last place.

SIR E. Indeed! from whom?

MRS. C. From your mistress, to be sure.

SIR E. What mistress?

MRS. C. Have you so many? [*Stops and faces him suddenly.*]

SIR E. None! but I seek one, and *that* one—

MRS. C. Will have a remarkably troublesome servant. [*Sits.*]

SIR E. Well, if I am not allowed to finish a sentence—[*walks away offended*].

MRS. C. My very good friend, when you are talking with a lady, think yourself remarkably well off if you are allowed to *begin* a sentence.

SIR E. I am quite aware that ladies—

MRS. C. Are very unreasonable on that subject—generally speaking, they are—I am an exception. You wish to say something?

SIR E. I do—something very—

MRS. C. Stop a minute—you shall have every chance—sit down and warm yourself, while I work. [HE *sits.*] When you feel inclined to speak—speak, and I won't interrupt you.

SIR E. [*rises*]. I cannot sit—I am too much agitated. [*Paces stage.*]

MRS. C. Well, whatever you do, don't walk about, for that is unbearable. You're setting your heels on my nerves, I tell you.

SIR E. I don't know what to do. You're very disconcerting.

MRS. C. Poor man! then I'll tell you—fetch the scuttle, and put on some coals.

SIR E. Hadn't I better ring for your servant?

MRS. C. Certainly not! when I rung for him you answered

the bell, and not only that, but you applied for the place. Now go to work.

SIR E. He is shaking the snow off my coat.

MRS. C. An additional reason for your doing his work, and so let me see how well you can do it. [*He fetches scuttle, which he carries with both hands.*] Very well, very well—upon my word I think you have been in service before; there, don't spill them, or I shall have to send you about your business.

SIR E. [*stopping*]. Mrs. Chillingtone, listen to me, I am serious——

MRS. C. Not with the coal-scuttle in your hand, surely.

SIR E. It is very hard that you will turn everything I say into ridicule; however, in the hope that artificial warmth may thaw the natural iciness of your disposition, I will make up the fire before I unburden my mind.

MRS. C. Stop! I have had hundreds of serious speeches made to me, but it just occurs to me that I never heard one from a man with a scuttle full of coals. Speak just as you are, scuttle and all.

SIR E. No! indeed, I shall not.

MRS. C. Now, do, pray; you can't think how well you look. A smudge on your nose would make the picture perfect.

SIR E. You must excuse me. I certainly cannot see why a man who feels earnestly should not express himself earnestly at any moment; neither do I see that the ebullition of a genuine feeling is rendered less worthy of attention by the accidental circumstance of his having a coal-scuttle in his hand; but [*throwing some coals on*] you have chosen to point attention to the fact, and possibly [*throwing more*] there *may* be some degree of ridicule attached to it. Therefore, although I burn to speak—[*he looks at her, she is looking another way*] I say, Mrs. Chillingtone, although I burn to speak—[*throwing all that remains on*].

MRS. C. Don't smother the fire on my account.

SIR E. [*putting down scuttle, and pacing stage—aside*]. Her cool indifference is past belief. I'm not used to be treated in

such a way by women, and yet there *are* moments when I fancy that she is listening more than she pretends to be.

MRS. C. Are you speaking to me, Sir Edward? because I don't hear one word you say.

SIR E. I was talking to myself.

MRS. C. And there is no better way of ensuring an attentive listener.

SIR E. Thank you, madam.

MRS. C. [*rising and coming forward*]. You and I have known one another a long time; why say "Madam"? It sounds very formal.

SIR E. Does it, does it! [*Aside.*] She thaws, by Jupiter, she thaws! [*Aloud, and earnestly.*] Does it?

MRS. C. Does it, does it, does it? Why, yes, it does—and what then? [*Takes up a book and slams it angrily on table.*]

SIR E. [*Aside.*] Down to the freezing-point again. I'll pretend to go, and try what that will do.

MRS. C. I haven't had the speech yet; when are you going to begin?

SIR E. Some other time; I t' ink I hear a carriage [*going*].

MRS. C. I hear none, but if anybody should call, I can say "not at home."

SIR E. [*aside*]. Oh, ho, my lady! [*Returning.*] Well, since you will say "not at home"—

MRS. C. I didn't say I *would*—I only said I *could.*

SIR E. Mrs. Chillingtone, good morning [*going*].

MRS. C. Nonsense! stay where you are, you restless man.

SIR E. You're very kind, but I must go. [*Goes to door, which he opens and holds in hand, standing half in and half out.*]

MRS. C. Where to?

SIR E. I don't know; but good-bye.

MRS. C. Till when, then?

SIR E. [*aside*]. She says "till when?" It's my private opinion she wishes me to stay.

MRS. C. Till when?

SIR E. Till to-morrow. [*Aside.*] One day's absence will bring her to her senses [*going*].

MRS. C. Not to-morrow, you cruel man.

SIR E. [*shutting door and returning*]. Ah! you wish me not to go to-day. [*Comes close, both hands extended in emotional appeal.*]

MRS. C. I don't wish you not to go to-day—I only wish you not to come to-morrow. [*He appears crestfallen. She laughs.*]

SIR E. Shall you be out?

MRS. C. No, I shall be at home; but I shan't want you.

SIR E. [*aside*]. It's nothing to me; but as sure as fate, there's a man in the case—it's nothing to me, I say, but I don't like it. [*Aloud.*] "You shan't *want* me," Mrs. Chillingtone—"you shan't want me?" that is, don't misunderstand me, I don't mean to say it's likely you would want me, but when you say you don't want me, it seems as much as to say you don't wish for me; of course, I don't mean to say it's likely you would wish for me, but when you say, or *if* you say, you don't wish for me, it's *almost* as much as to say that you wish me away; I say *almost*, I don't say *quite*.

MRS. C. But I do; you have been a long time arriving at a conclusion, but the curious part of the business is that you have arrived at the right one.

SIR E. After such a declaration, it would be folly in me to say another word.

MRS. C. A declaration? good gracious! Who has made a declaration? I heard none.

SIR E. This is trifling; I say it would be folly in me to say another word.

MRS. C. So it would, so it would; but you'll say it for all that.

SIR E. Well, I believe I shall, in fact, I must; I have a question to ask you—a question, my dear Mrs. Chillingtone, to which I must entreat your most serious attention. [*She walks gently off to her room.*] I will not add to your embarrassment by

even looking at you while you answer it, contenting myself with merely begging that your answer may be a candid one. [*Listens.*] Yes, cost what it may, a candid one. [*Listens again.*] I pause for your assurance that it shall be a candid one. [*Aside.*]. She hesitates—she's lost.

MRS. C. [*calling from within*]. Are you gone, Sir Edward?

SIR E. Gone, Mrs. Chillingtone? gone? Why, *you* are gone.

MRS. C. [*re-entering*]. Only for the moment. I went for my thimble.

SIR E. Went for your thimble! [*Aside.*] Women have always an excuse at the tips of their fingers. [*Aloud.*] Only for a moment! Don't you know what Mrs. Haller says? "There are moments in which we live years."

MRS. C. I must beg, Sir Edward, that you won't quote Mrs. Haller to me. I never associate with ladies of that description.

SIR E. [*aside*]. This is put on—she must be shamming, for she couldn't know that I was—how deceitful women are! but I will go *now.* [*Goes to door.*] I positively will go. [*Opens door, then stops—aloud.*] Surely you heard my question.

MRS. C. Well, I fancied I heard you mumbling something.

SIR E. Mumbling! [*Aside.*] Well, well, I'll bear it all—my turn *must* come. [*Aloud.*] I asked you why you wished me away?

MRS. C. What! to-morrow? [*Busies herself with sewing.*]

SIR E. Yes. [*Sits at table opposite* MRS. C.]

MRS. C. Oh! because I expect somebody else.

SIR E. A man?

MRS. C. Ah, that's the worst of it! [*Repeatedly sticks pins in a cushion on table.*]

SIR E. A husband, perhaps?

MRS. C. No, a simple man.

SIR E. The more simple, the more likely to become a husband.

MRS. C. That is the most natural thing you have said yet.

SIR E. Why so? [*Puts hand on table near cushion.*]

MRS. C. It's so rude. [*Sticks pin in his hand instead of cushion.*]

SIR E. [*withdrawing hand*]. Wow! [*Aside.*] She doesn't know a man from a pin-cushion. [*Aloud.*] I didn't mean to be rude; make allowance for my feelings—I *feared* it was a husband.

MRS. C. You need not have feared it. When you asked if it was a man that I expected, I said "that's the worst of it." I could not have said that, if it had been a husband.

SIR E. *Now,* who is rude? but I care nothing for the rudeness—I derive warmth and comfort from the openness of that assurance.

MRS. C. [*imitating his tone*]. And I derive neither warmth nor comfort from the openness of that door! so I wish you would shut it.

SIR E. Oh, Mrs. Chillingtone, you are *too* cold.

MRS. C. I told you so.

SIR E. [*going toward door*]. Be content; I am about to shut it once and forever.

MRS. C. And when you have shut it, on which side of it do you propose to remain?

SIR E. Has the lovely Mrs. Chillingtone a choice upon the subject?

MRS. C. The lovely Mrs. Chillingtone has *no* choice upon the subject—but the lovely Mrs. Chillingtone, like the rest of her too fascinating sex, has considerable curiosity.

SIR E. Your wish shall be gratified—I remain on *this* side. [*Comes in, having shut door.*]

MRS. C. I excuse the impertinence of that speech for the sake of its amusing vanity.

SIR E. [*aside*]. I'll let her go on—I'll let her go on—there *will come* a day of reckoning.

MRS. C. Well, sir?

SIR E. Well, ma'am?

MRS. C. Oh, nonsense! you mustn't repeat my words—you must say something; suppose this were a play, you couldn't come into a room where a lady was, shut the door, and not speak.

SIR E. Perhaps you will be good enough to furnish the plot of the play.

MRS. C. I fancy it would be more in my way to act it; however, I'll try my hand. I must begin, I believe, with the stage directions. [*Puts down sewing and rises.*]

SIR E. If you please.

MRS. C. Well—"the stage represents a drawing-room in Mrs. Chillingtone's country house—a large party are assembled at another country house, a few miles off."

SIR E. What, on the stage?

MRS. C. No, no! that is only for *your* information, to help you what to say; now, don't interrupt me, and don't speak till I tell you. "Mrs. C. has been strongly pressed to join the party at her neighbor's house; but, knowing herself to be rather an attractive person, and knowing that men, always more or less silly about women, think it behooves them to make especial donkeys of themselves when on a visit in a country house, she has declined. One of the gentlemen——"

SIR E. Donkey!

MRS. C. "Sir Edward Ardent, by name"—(I told you not to interrupt me, and you see what you have got by it)—"thinks proper to ride over to Mrs. Chillingtone's under pretense of a 'morning call,' although it is very evident to her that he has some other object lurking behind."

SIR E. How does she know that?

MRS. C. I'm writing a play, and I'm not bound to tell more than I like.

SIR E. But I have to speak presently, and I want information.

MRS. C. You shall have more than you want. "Sir Edward, like hundreds of other moderately good-looking men, has been humored by sundry weak women until he fancies himself irresistible."

SIR E. [*aside*]. He may prove so yet.

MRS. C. "And, taking advantage of a previous acquaintance with Mrs. C., to deprive her of her privilege of saying 'not at home,' he breaks through the ordinary rules of society—enters—her room without being announced—and——"

SIR E. Stay! I can explain all.

MRS. C. Can you? that is just what I want; but don't be in a hurry—pull that couch this way. [*He pulls couch to center of stage.*] "Mrs. Chillingtone, though astonished at his coolness, takes her seat on one side of the couch [*she sits*] and motions Sir Edward to occupy the other." [*He prepares to do so, and when nearly seated,* MRS. CHILLINGTONE *puts hand under his arm and causes him to rise again.*] "He has *almost* done so when he suddenly recollects that he has omitted to bow on accepting the invitation." [*He bows to her.*] "Having supplied the omission, he takes his seat, and Mrs. Chillingtone waits patiently for the promised explanation of his extraordinary conduct."

SIR E. I can give it in five words.

MRS. C. Not less?

SIR E. Yes, in three—"I love you!"

MRS. C. Stay a minute—let me clearly understand. Are you carrying on the little drama I began, or are you, Sir Edward Ardent, *Bart.*, in your own proper person, addressing yourself to me—Fanny Chillingtone, widow?

SIR E. I hope you don't take me for an actor.

MRS. C. Well, in love affairs, there is not much difference between a man on and a man off the stage—one is a professional actor, and the other an actor of professions.

SIR E. You think, then, that truth has no part in love affairs?

MRS. C. Oh, yes it has, I wish it hadn't.

SIR E. Why so?

MRS. C. Because it always comes too late.

SIR E. Always?

MRS. C. I speak from my own experience.

SIR E. You have never tried but once. [*Sits closer.*]

MRS. C. And have no inclination to try again. [*She moves away.*]

SIR E. You think all men alike, then? [*Sits closer.*]

MRS. C. Yes, in their disposition to deceive women. [*She moves away again.*]

SIR E. Ah! Mrs. Chillingtone, I could die for you.

MRS. C. What a charming speech! Many men have offered to live for me, and I have refused them. You propose to die for me—now if I thought I could depend upon you——

SIR E. [*aside*]. Confound your impudence! but I'll be even with you yet. [*Aloud.*] You may, indeed, you may. Ah, Mrs. Chillingtone, I could lie at your feet the live-long day, like a pet dog, with happy eyes to see you, with greedy ears to hear you, and express, by mute devotion, that deep affection which, at last, no tongue, however eloquent, could tell. [*He sits on footstool by her knee.*]

MRS. C. [*aside*]. Hang the fellow, how pleasant he talks!

SIR E. [*aside*]. She's touched.

MRS. C. There is only one thing I fear, Sir Edward.

SIR E. [*earnestly*]. Say what it is? It ceases with the utterance.

MRS. C. If you were to become my pet dog——

SIR E. Yes!

MRS. C. I'm afraid you would expect me to wash and comb you every day. [*Laughs at him, rises, and walks about.*]

SIR E. [*rises, and paces the stage*]. Really, Mrs. Chillingtone—this indifference—I wish you wouldn't laugh—this indifference—now, pray don't laugh—this indifference to one who—oh, well, if you are determined to laugh, it's useless to attempt opening one's mouth.

MRS. C. There, there, I won't laugh any more. [*Sits down.*] I'm dumb, and will only express by mute devotion, that (what is it? oh!) that deep affection which no tongue, however eloquent, can tell.

SIR E. I should be sorry, Mrs. Chillingtone, to charge you with affectation, but this indifference is *unlike* your sex. [*Aside.*] I'll try if I can make her jealous. [*Aloud.*] I don't hesitate to tell you that it has been my fate to make an impression upon the fairer portion of the creation; it is not one, two, ten or twenty only, that I might have married, had I but held my little finger up. I haven't a particle of vanity in my composition; but common sense tells us there must be something about me to account for the very marked preference shown me by the ladies. [*Consciously arranges his tie.*]

MRS. C. Don't mistake me! I always listen with pleasure when my own praises are sounded, though I seldom take the trouble to inquire to what regiment the trumpeter belongs; you may go on.

SIR E. It is now some three years since first I met you; on that occasion it was my good fortune to dance with you—shall I ever forget that dance? no! to my dying day the very tune will haunt me—it was a polka!

MRS. C. No such thing; it was a quadrille.

SIR E. You're right, it was. I said it but to try you.

MRS. C. [*aside*]. I wish I had held my tongue.

SIR E. [*aside*]. I didn't remember a bit about it; but that's nothing. [*Aloud.*] You are quite aware that I never even hinted to you the passion with which you then inspired me.

MRS. C. [*aside*]. Now, *is* he going to have the effrontery to pretend that he has been in love with me all this time?

SIR E. No, like the gentle Viola, I "let concealment feed on my damask cheek."

MRS. C. Never mind. You have plenty of it left.

SIR E. Is this a moment for levity? I ask you, *is* this a moment for levity? But I am rightly served—women have adored me by dozens, and I have sported with their feelings, I have slighted them, poor dears! And, now, I, in turn, am doomed to the bitter pangs of unrequited affection. Oh, Mrs. Chillingtone, may you be saved from such a fate! You have many ad-

mirers (not so many, I dare say, as I have), but a great many—you snub them all, but beware! the time and the man may come, and you may meet in our sex the avenger I have found in yours.

MRS. C. There's no great danger.

SIR E. I don't know that; love delights in tormenting—women are weak creatures, men are full of deceit.

MRS. C. You must be going to publish a copy-book. Sounds like it.

SIR E. Extremes frequently meet; she who begins by hating, often ends by loving; some day you may be addressed by one whom, like myself, for instance, at first sight—he may be very good-looking, although you may think him plain—his figure may be nearly faultless, and you see nothing in it—his conversation, winning to all other ears, may fall unheeded upon yours—nay, even his voice, to many soft and sweet, may sound to you harsh and discordant. And yet this man shall bend your stubborn spirit—and how? I grieve to say by flattery; he shall tell you you've a pretty foot.

MRS. C. Oh, Sir Edward! [*Sticks out her foot and peeps at it.*]

SIR E. And praise, as indeed he may with truth, your dancing; he shall talk of the beauty of your figure——

MRS. C. Oh, Sir Edward! [*Takes waltz step or two.*]

SIR E. And compare it, to its advantage, with the classic forms of old; he shall discourse of your brilliant wit——

MRS. C. Oh, Sir Edward! you'll prevent me from speaking at all. [*Sinks into sofa.*]

SIR E. And, having thus fixed your attention, and secured your silence, he shall tell you that your voice is "linked sweetness long drawn out," that your face [MRS. CHILLINGTONE *leans back, and throws white handkerchief over head*]—but here description fails me—not because, as a proof of your unequaled modesty, you have concealed it—but because language offers not the means to do it justice. He no doubt will feel the same difficulty, and passing to your hand, he shall venture to take it within his, and finding

no resistance, even to press it to his lips—then, on a sudden, will the change take place—then will his figure in an instant become good, his face handsome, his conversation brilliant, and his voice musical—then; but possibly I offend you—I will release your hand. [*He lets it go, it falls by her side. Aside.*] How is this? Is she ill? No; slightly overcome—it's only another victory gained a little sooner than I expected. Edward Ardent, what the devil *is* there in you that no woman on earth can resist you? I *must* look at her. [*Pulls the handkerchief from her face.*] Fast asleep, by all that's horrible! [*Walks up and down much excited.*] It's enough to drive one mad—downright stark, staring, raving mad—but she wakes.

MRS. C. [*who has only pretended to be asleep, pretending to awake*]. What o'clock? Oh, what a dreadful noise you make. I was having such a nice nap.

SIR E. And charming dreams, no doubt?

MRS. C. Yes, just till this minute. I dreamt that a nice, gentlemanly man was saying all sorts of captivating things to me.

SIR E. [*aside*]. *Indeed!* [*Aloud.*] You *do* care about the creatures, then?

MRS. C. Not a bit; but you know how absurd dreams are.

SIR E. Very likely. "A nice, gentlemanly man was saying all sorts of captivating things to you."

MRS. C. When suddenly he turned into a monkey, and grinned and chattered most repulsively. At length the monkey darted at my hand; I fancied that he was going to bite it, and—I suppose that awoke me.

SIR E. Others can awake from dreams as well as you. Madam, good morning [*going*].

MRS. C. Where is the man going to?

SIR E. "The man!" the monster, you mean. [*Gives exclamation of rage and clenches fists as he paces floor.*]

MRS. C. Well, the monster. Ha, ha!

SIR E. To the zoological gardens. [*Exit.*]

MRS. C. He is actually gone; and some women would say

"I have lost him forever." I—knowing a little more of the world—allow him five minutes, at the outside, to return. [*Re-enter* SIR EDWARD.] I have been too liberal. [*To* SIR EDWARD.] What! won't the Zoologicals have you? have they too many specimens already?

SIR E. No; but they won't receive me without a certificate from you.

MRS. C. Of what, pray?

SIR E. That I have been your pet monkey.

MRS. C. You grow insulting, sir; and I shall leave the room [*going*].

SIR E. Nay, that is more my duty.

MRS. C. So I think; but until you do, I shall. [*Exits, slamming door.*]

SIR E. Oh! very well, ma'am. [*He watches her out.*] Go? I should think so. Go? I should like to know who would stay. [*Sits down.*]

[*Re-enter* MRS. CHILLINGTONE.]

MRS. C. Not gone yet, Sir Edward?

SIR E. Returned so soon, Mrs. Chillingtone?

MRS. C. Having a right to suppose the house clear, it surely was not very wonderful that I should return to my own drawing-room.

SIR E. Oh, I'm gone. I merely came back to look for my little dog. [*Whistles.*] Trim, Trim, Trim. [*Whistles again.*] Where on earth has the dog got to? Trim, Trim, Trim.

MRS. C. That was not your real excuse, sir, so don't condescend to deceit.

SIR E. You are right, it was not. I returned to prove that I was not quite a monster, and to take my leave somewhat less abruptly.

MRS. C. Why go at all? [*Smiles and offers chair.*]

SIR E. Do you wish me to remain on your account?

MRS. C. Oh, dear no; on your own. After being so excessively warm it might be dangerous to rush into this frosty air.

[*Laughs at him.*] Sudden changes sometimes produce astonishing effects.

SIR E. [*aside*]. Sudden changes! "I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word." I'll try a sudden change. [*Aloud.*] I've no objection to staying an hour or two, as you seem to wish it. [*Goes to fireplace—draws chair, and seats himself with back to her.*] Have you got such a thing as a newspaper?

MRS. C. A newspaper, Sir Edward? A newspaper, in my company?

SIR E. Why not? You went to sleep in mine.

MRS. C. I was not asleep, sir?

SIR E. Oh! you were only pretending?

MRS. C. That was all. I heard every word of the nonsense you talked.

SIR E. Ah! you may well call it nonsense. What rubbish one does talk to women—doesn't one? And the best of it is, they believe it—poor things!

MRS. C. "Poor things," Sir Edward! "poor things!" You don't flatter yourself that I believed what you were saying; although it was easy to see that you meant every word.

SIR E. Have you seen the poker anywhere?

MRS. C. The poker?

SIR E. What *can* there be in women that, although quick to detect us when we flatter others, they invariably gorge the bait themselves?

MRS. C. *I* gorge the bait, Sir Edward!—I!

SIR E. How can my remarks apply to you? You are a professed man-hater. You wear the man-hating scowl.

MRS. C. I have never said anything of the sort, nor do I wear it.

SIR E. Well, you have given out that you mean never to marry again!

MRS. C. I don't know that I have gone so far as *that;* but that has nothing to do with it. You have been for the last twenty minutes making me professions of admiration and attachment. I need hardly to tell you that they were perfectly in-

different to me; but the extraordinary alteration in your tone and manner gives me the right to have this question answered—did you mean them?

SIR E. [*laughing*]. No.

MRS. C. Were you attempting to make a fool of me?

SIR E. [*laughing*]. Yes.

MRS. C. [*aside*]. This is a little too much. [*Aloud.*] Look you, Sir Edward Ardent, your assumed coldness—

SIR E. And your assumed excitement—

MRS. C. I don't say that it *is* altogether assumed.

SIR E. You're annoyed, then?

MRS. C. Not the least annoyed; but I'm excessively provoked at the deception you have practised. But it was *not* a deception—I won't admit that it was a deception. You were quite sincere.

SIR E. Not I.

MRS. C. You admire me beyond any woman you ever saw.

SIR E. Now, pray don't talk nonsense.

MRS. C. You do—and you love me to distraction.

SIR E. Don't I look as if I did. [*Crosses legs carelessly and wags foot.*]

MRS. C. I don't care for that. You love me to distraction—and if you don't, you ought. And whether you do or not, after what you have said, you are bound to marry me if I insist upon it; and rather than you should go away and have the impertinence to brag to your male friends that you have had the best of it, I *do* insist upon it. So now, sir, marry me, and then we shall *see* who has the best of it.

SIR E. [*altering his tone*]. Are you serious?

MRS. C. Perfectly.

SIR E. [*rising, and coming forward*]. Then for once, Mrs. Chillingtone, *I* am serious. You had a perfect right to determine not to marry again; but the pains you took to make that determination public, looked like a studied insult to us bachelors; and, at a special meeting duly convened, it was voted that you should be made to break your resolution. I have succeeded in conquering

your boasted aversion to mankind—but there, I regret to say, the task assigned me ends. In taking my leave, I will not affect to deny that I admire you; but all personal considerations must bend before a sense of public duty. It became necessary to read you a great moral lesson; and—with the sternness of a judge who carries out the wholesale rigors of the law—I have read it. [*Bows, and is going.*]

MRS. C. Stay, Sir Edward. [*He stops and turns—aside.*] Flesh and blood can't bear this. [*Aloud.*] Stay for a moment, and ask yourself your true position. A set of men combine to form a plan against one poor weak woman; you are selected as their scape-goat; if you fail, they're ready with their jeers—if you succeed, the victory is theirs—the odium yours.

SIR E. [*aside*]. I'm dreadfully afraid that's true.

MRS. C. [*aside*]. Now for it. [*Aloud.*] And you have succeeded but too well; my pride is humbled—the advantages which you possess of face and figure—

SIR E. [*aside*]. Oho!

MRS. C. Those brilliant powers of conversation which Nature has given you, and which you so fatally can use, have brought me to your feet—and now you propose to leave me.

SIR E. How is this? Can it be that you really love me?

MRS. C. Can it be that you know yourself, and doubt it? Oh, Sir Edward, would that the choice of my appointed conqueror had fallen on one less fascinating—or that your pride had been content to feed on victories past, nor claimed another female slave to chain to your triumphant chariot-wheels! [*Much moved.*] But thus to conquer, and thus cruelly to leave, is but a wanton exercise of power, and may be likened to that of the fowler, who shoots the bird he cares not to preserve, for the mere pleasure of seeing the hapless creature die! [*Weeps.*]

SIR E. [*aside*]. Die? D—n it, she mustn't die! I've gone too far. [*Aloud, and with patronizing air.*] No, no, my dear Mrs. Chillingtone—I have no pleasure in anything of the sort, I assure you. Calm yourself, I entreat you. I'm sure you won't attribute it to anything in the shape of vanity, when I say that it

is evident I have been a little more fascinating than I intended. I meant to win your consent, certainly—and I have won it; but thinking—pardon me—that you were *rather* heartless (at least, so I understood you understand), I never dreamt—(don't you see?) that I should touch your *heart.* It only shows that one never knows one's own powers! however, though thoughtless, and perhaps wild, I trust that I am still a gentleman. [*Aside.*] How deuced well she looks through her tears! [*Aloud.*] And rather than see a lady suffer on my account [*aside, having looked at her again*] oh, by George! a man might do a great deal worse [*aloud*] I offer you, this time in all sincerity, my hand and fortune.

MRS. C. Sir Edward Ardent knows but little of the woman whom he honors with his pity, if he supposes she would wed a king upon such terms. It is my duty, however, to thank you for your generous offer—the more generous because affection has no share in it.

SIR E. Now, Mrs. Chillingtone, upon my word, you must not say that. I assure you, I'm extremely fond of you—I was afraid I was—I mean, thought I was; but this last half hour has convinced me.

MRS. C. It will take longer to convince me.

SIR E. Time is nothing—sincerity everything. I am the most devoted of your slaves.

MRS. C. I'm sorry to hear it; the best slaves make the worst masters.

SIR E. I'll promise anything.

MRS. C. So will a servant seeking a situation—so will a candidate for a seat in Parliament—and so, no doubt, would a king, were the office elective. [*Paces floor agitatedly.*]

SIR E. How can *you* hope to escape a risk which is common to all? Any man may break his word.

MRS. C. And where women are concerned most men do.

SIR E. Men, not gentlemen.

MRS. C. Am I to understand that you are a gentleman, and not a man?

SIR E. At present, think of me only as a lover. I am the slave of the ring, ready to obey you in all things. I entreat you make trial of your power.

MRS. C. You shall be indulged. Fetch my bonnet and shawl; [*he goes for them*] and while you are about it, bring your own hat. [*He returns with them.*] Now put that on. [*He is about to put on hat.*] No, no, put on my bonnet.

SIR E. Not your bonnet!

MRS. C. Yes, and shawl. [*He puts on bonnet and shawl.*] Good, now give me your hat. [*He gives it to her.*]

SIR E. What next, I wonder?

MRS. C. Now, sir, according to your own modest account, ladies have been making love to you all your life. I am curious to see how a lady looks when she so demeans herself; [*putting on his hat*] fancy me the fascinating man, which you evidently fancy yourself. Down on your knees, and—I leave the rest to you.

SIR E. Well, if I must—there. [*Kneels.*] Hear me, then, you captivating tyrant, while I own that I love you, and ask, in all humility, for a return.

MRS. C. [*aside*]. I have him down at last, and there I'll keep him. I fear I care too much about him, and love is sweet; but to an insulted woman revenge is sweeter.

SIR E. I entreat you to relieve me from a position which is not only painful, but extremely inconvenient. Do you love me?

MRS. C. What if I do? You are aware that all personal considerations must bend before a sense of public duty. It is necessary to read you a great moral lesson.

SIR E. You do not love me, then?

MRS. C. [*taking off hat, and throwing it away*]. No; I was shamming. Laughing at you. Ha, ha, ha!

SIR E. [*rising, and throwing away bonnet and shawl*]. So was I.

MRS. C. Your assertion comes a little too late, sir. What would you have me infer from your having been on your knees to me?

SIR E. That I want a clothes-brush.

MRS. C. Indeed!—my servant will furnish you with one as you go out.

SIR E. Very well, madam—I understand your hint; but remember, I go to bear witness to my friends that you accepted me, and I declined—I'm bound to speak the truth.

MRS. C. Ay, and the whole truth; you will therefore be pleased to add, that subsequently *I* declined the honor *you* proposed.

SIR E. I'm afraid that will make me look ridiculous.

MRS. C. Not more than you do now, I think

SIR E. There is one way to make it bearable.

MRS. C. And that is—

SIR E. Union is strength; let us be married and share the ridicule between us.

MRS. C. A very handsome offer; half your ridicule is to be my marriage settlement.

SIR E. Half all I possess on earth—nay the whole. I get the better half again if I get you.

MRS. C. But will a general, so celebrated in the field of love, be content to renounce all future conquests?

SIR E. Let him but win this final battle, and he will. You shall be his Waterloo—in conquering you he masters all the world—for you, henceforth, are all the world to him. Come!

MRS. C. Oh, Edward! [*Falls into his arms.*]

CURTAIN.

THE PHOTOGRAPH.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR.

See dis pictyah in my han'?
Dat's my gal.
Ain't she purty? Goodness lan'!
Huh name Sal.
Dat's de very way she be,—
Kin' o' tickles me to see
Huh smilin' back at me.

She sont me dis photograph
Jes' last week;
An', aldough it made me laugh,
My black cheek
Felt somethin' a-runnin' queer—
Bless yo' soul, it was a tear,—
Jes' f'om wishin' she was here.

Often when I's all alone
Layin' here,
I git t'inkin' 'bout my own
Sallie dear;
How she say I'se huh beau.
An' hit tickles me to know
Dat de girl do love me so.

Some bright day I'se goin' back,
Fo' do la!
An', as sho'z my face is black,
Ax huh pa.
De blessed little miss,
Who's a smilin' out o' dis
Pictyah, lak she wan'ed a kiss.

THOSE LANDLADIES.

INA LEON CASSILIS.

Text and Stage-Business Edited and Revised
By PAULINE PHELPS and MARION SHORT.

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CHARACTERS: ISABEL MORTON, a young lady teacher.
MRS. DOBBS, a landlady.

SCENE: Sitting-room in a lodging-house. Chair by table R. Sofa with cushions L. Pictures on wall. Other furnishings ad lib. Door C. in flat.

[*Enter* ISABEL *with a letter, which she kisses several times.*]

ISABEL. You dear, darling Harry—to write so soon again! [*sits by table R.*]—though, to be sure, I should have been awfully disappointed if you hadn't! Why, I've had no letter since yesterday morning. Now, let's see what he says—the old dear! [*Kisses letter. Opens it. Knock at door. She does not notice. Reads.*] "My own dearest, best of darlings—"

[*Enter* MRS. DOBBS, *with duster and feather-brush. She is a regular specimen of landlady, elderly, and dressed in slovenly fashion.*]

MRS. DOBBS [*in somewhat familiar manner*]. Thank you, Miss. I thought as 'ow you wouldn't mind me comin' in to do the dustin'! You see, there ain't much time of a mornin', what with gettin' off the children to school, and Seusan 'avin' to wait on the gents in the second floor as 'as their breakfastis at h'eight, an' six rashers o' backon to fry an' heggs accordin'! [*Rolls up sleeves.*]

ISABEL [*who has hardly noticed her, absently*]. Yes, Mrs. Dobbs, all right. [MRS. D. *sniffs. Begins dusting.*]

ISABEL [*reads*]. "My own love, when I last looked on your sweet face, I thought—"

MRS. D. [*interrupting so glibly as to make her speech seem a continuance of* ISABEL'S]. Them gals is awful dirty an' ontoidy. I never did see sich a lot o' dust. [*Takes up cushion and pounds it with stick.*]

ISABEL [*not heeding, laughs*]. You stupid old dear—what made you think I didn't look well!—

MRS. D. Not stoopid, nor h'old neither, Miss! least ways I ain't forty yet, an'. I hain't said nothin' h'about your 'ealth; an' was married when I wasn't no more than seventeen, in lilock sat'n an' a white bonnet with h'orange blossoms, h'an a pimple on my nose distressed me h'orful, an' Dobbs 'ad a bloo coat and gray trousers, as is dead now an' buried in h'Abney Park Cimmitry, which 'is father an' mother was buried in the same grave, an' lived together nigh on fifty years and never a quarrel. [*Mounts chair to dust picture.*]

ISABEL [*glancing up at* MRS. D.'s *back*]. Old party seems to have the habit of talking to herself. [*Reads.*] "Do you remember last Sunday, on the river, dearest, when I was lying at your feet—"

MRS. D. [*turns toward* ISABEL, *still standing on chair*]. 'E was as fine a figger of a man as you could see in a mornin's walk, 'ed such calves growin' on 'is legs, and looked quite the gen'leman in 'is 'igh 'at of a Sunday, though, to be sure, 'e'd take a drop too much. [*Straightens picture on wall.*]

ISABEL [*reads*]. "With your hand in mine—while we drifted, drifted—" [*sighs dreamily, gazing at letter*].

MRS. D. An' that's the way with all of 'em, it's the drink 'at does it, an' you take my advice, an' don't you git married [*jumps down*]; you'll 'ave to keep yer 'usband—"

ISABEL [*reads*]. "And the little lambs." Ah! yes, could I forget? [*Clasps hands under chin, elbows on table, and looks up dreamily.*]

MRS. D. You'll be glad anuff to forgit, but 'tain't easy with four children to keep [*straightens chairs and dusts them*], an' a lodgin' 'ouse full, an' me as never soiled my 'ands, bein' as I may say born a lydy, which my pa never would consent to me marryin' Dobbs as was a idle, good-for-nothin'—

ISABEL [*clasping letter to bosom*]. Ah! that happy day!

MRS. D. 'Appy! it was the wust day as I ever 'ad! Rainin', an' everyone over-h'eatin' at the table h'afterwards; an' I wish I'd never seen 'im—I do,—which wasn't my h'equal.

ISABEL [*reads*]. "How handsome you looked!"

MRS. D. [*smirking*]. Well, that's as one may think. I never liked a squint myself, tho' if I do squint I'm 'andsomer than 'im. Why, Dobbs was that cross-eyed, you couldn't tell whether 'e was a lookin' at you, or round the corner of the 'ouse, an' when we went walkin' Sundays, e'd h'often kiss the girl walkin' the other side of 'im when 'e reached a shady spot thinkin' hit was me—'is h'eyes were that h'uncertain.

ISABEL. Dear me, I've been dreaming and lost my place [*begins looking through letter again*]. Ah! well, what comes next?

MRS. D. [*sits down, folding apron over hands*]. A pint o' beer hain't amiss; I'm partial to it myself—but when it comes to sperits, an' drinkin' 'em fust thing in the mornin' an' last thing at night, why, I calls that a shameful waste o' money—don't you?

ISABEL [*reads*]. "I wish we could be together always—every day, and all day! I wonder if I should ever get tired of it." [*Sighs rapturously.*]

MRS. D. Tired? Lor, I can put hup with you if you can with me, Miss. Me that wasn't brought h'up to 'ard work an' can't scrub a floor to this day. I was brought up like a lydy—to do nothink—[*glances at* ISABEL]—not but what there is lydies as 'as to work for their livin' same as me, an' I'm sorry for 'em; but my Uncle Josiah, what lived anigh 'amstid 'eath afore it was all spilt, an' that there Caounty Cauncil a meddlin' an' a 'umbuggin' an' puttin' up fences yere an' there, an' you can't never go nowhere, 'e says to me 'e says: "You hain't never no need to work, Sarah," 'e says; that's my name as was christened after my Aunt

Sarah as lived in the 'ighest fam'lies, an' 'ad four 'orses to her funeral an' sich a storm as never was, we thought the 'earse would upset.

ISABEL [*who has been reading, not listening*]. In Burnham Beeches! Oh! delightful!

MRS. D. No, miss, in the cimmitry, if you'll believe me, the 'earse was almost—

ISABEL [*rapturously*]. Coming! Actually coming! By the 10:30 from Paddington—

MRS. D. [*brings hand down on* ISABEL'S *shoulder*]. An' the h'undertaker's 'at—

ISABEL [*starting in surprise and looking up at* MRS. D.]. At what?

MRS. D. [*staring*]. 'Is 'at was took off by the wind—

ISABEL. Oh! Yes, it is quite windy around here. [*Aside.*] What is she jabbering about? [*Returns to letter.*]

MRS. D. [*peering over* ISABEL'S *shoulder at letter*]. I s'pose it's from 'er young man! [*Aloud.*] Lor! miss, don't you believe in 'em—they're all alike. Why, Dobbs, when he was a'courtin', you'd ha' thought butter wouldn't melt in 'is mouth, an' 'is letters —why, they was all over crosses—there was more crosses than writin'. But, Lor! when we was married there was more cuffs than kisses. You won't catch me with a second 'usband! If I was you, I wouldn't 'ave a fust. I say, I wouldn't 'ave a *fust.*

ISABEL [*absently*]. No, I don't mind the dust. [*Reads.*] "A little cottage, somewhere in the country, with roses and honeysuckles—"

MRS. D. A settin' up by the fire asleep 'alf the time, an' t'other 'alf in the public 'ouse—that's the way with 'em!

ISABEL [*kisses letter again*]. Oh! how sweet!

MRS. D. Sweet! wait till you're married! you'll sing another song. It hain't sweet to 'ave to keep your 'usband an' four childern, to say nothink of 'is mother as is always droppin' in to tea an' never so much as a penorth o' shrimps with her; not that I grudges anyone as wants 'em a bite an' a sup, but it's 'ard work for a woman to feed—

ISABEL. A pony carriage!—only fancy!—

MRS. D. [*amazed*]. Well, I should say it was! [*Aside.*] Whatever is she jabberin' about? [*Notices letter in* ISABEL'S *hand.*] Lor! what fools gals is over a love letter! It must a took 'er young man a week to write such a lot. Oh! Lor, I *am* tired. An' she hain't said another word about that pint. [*Aloud.*] You won't mind me settin' down, will yer? [*Wipes face with duster.*] Miss Ives as was yere afore you—her pa was a reel gentleman—kep' 'is 'orse an' didn't do nothink—she liked to 'ave me come an' chat with her an' 'av a pint at times.

ISABEL [*annoyed, looking up*]. Mrs. Dobbs! Why are you sitting there?

MRS. D. Don't mind me. You can go on readin' the letter. I know what it is—'ad 'em myself—from Dobbs—as I was telling you—.

ISABEL [*rising and folding up her letter*]. If you have finished your dusting, Mrs. Dobbs—

MRS. D. I 'aven't, my dear, I 'aven't—but there hain't no 'urry—no 'urry at all! I halways 'as time for visits and pints.

ISABEL. Then I shall wait in the hall and return to the room when you have left it! [*Going.*] Insufferable impertinence! I shall give notice to-morrow! [*Exits, nose in air.*]

MRS. D. [*rising*]. Well I never! I never *did*—in all my born days! So I hain't good anuff for yer, I hain't—little stuck up pauper of a music gove'niss! Sich h'airs an' graces, an' me a reel lydy what my father could a bought hup 'er an' her young man h'over and h'over! I hain't a-goin' to put up with h'airs in the second floor! Hout you go, Miss Morton, next week—which I don't believe you're h'even respectable. There! [*Flounces out.*]

CURTAIN.

IN VAIN.

MARION SHORT.

I wore a robe of lace that night,
  And twined amid my hair
Some purple violets and white,
  That I might seem more fair.

I threw my soul into my eyes,
  My heart into my smile,
My whole life in the songs I sang
  His fancy to beguile.

He said no word—but O his look!
  It held me in a spell;
He rose—I heard his steps advance
  I knew his mission well.

My fingers wandered o'er the keys;
  He paused not far away;
I waited longingly to hear
  The words he had to say.

He nearer came—my pulses throbbed!
  He stooped and whispered low:
"Miss Maud, let opera have a rest
  And give us 'Old Black Joe.'"

BREAKING THE ICE: OR, A PIECE OF HOLLY.

CHARLES THOMAS.

Text and Stage-Business Edited and Revised
By PAULINE PHELPS and MARION SHORT.

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CHARACTERS: CAPTAIN SELBY.
MISS MARTON.

SCENE: Room in a country inn. Large high screen drawn down stage to front, dividing stage into two equal parts; each side of screen furnished as a separate room. L. of screen: Fireplace; before fire an armchair; table R. of chair, with drawing materials; R. of table, a common chair; two more chairs in room; on one are MISS MARTON'S hat and ulster. R. of screen: Table, R. C., with chairs each side; window at back; between screen and window table with books, periodicals, etc. Above table hangs a mirror. CAPT. SELBY'S hat and ulster on a peg on door. MISS MARTON discovered sitting L. of screen with magazine; CAPT. SELBY R. of screen, standing looking out of window.

MISS MARTON [*sipping tea*]. H'm! A pretty position I must say. Snowed up in a country inn eight miles from home, compelled to share the only sitting-room with a strange man, and nothing to take away the awkwardness of the situation but a screen! [*Pause, while she turns page of magazine.*] After all, I rather like it—the situation I mean, not the screen; that might be dispensed with, if he were nice.

CAPT. SELBY. Still snowing. [*Turns from window and comes down R. of table.*] H'm! A nice fix you are in, Jack Selby. Due at Marton Towers to-morrow, and bottled up by the snow in this infernal old inn, with nothing but a lot of older periodicals to keep you company. Stay, though, I am forgetting, there's a lady—probably more ancient than the periodicals. [*Takes up paper.*]

MISS M. I wonder what my neighbor is like. Elderly, no doubt! Had he beeen young, he would have been more curious on my account, stupid old thing. [*Pause.*] I know, I'll make a fancy portrait of him. Let's see, where are my chalks? [*Turns to table and begins to draw.*]

CAPT. S. I wonder what my neighbor is like? Probably her face would stop an eight-day clock, and her voice sound like the alarm. [*Humorously.*] Only a screen between us two; I hope and trust she won't take advantage of my defenceless position.

MISS M. It's very difficult to put a polish on a bald head, with chalks. Now for the red chalk to give him a little color.

CAPT. S. Poor thing! I dare say she is dying to make my acquaintance! For one reason I shouldn't mind making hers; and that is, that she's got the fire on her side, and I'm getting rather chilly. [*Walks up and down quickly.*]

MISS M. There, I should like to see if my notion of him is correct. [*Brings chair close to screen.*]

CAPT. S. No, I think I had better stop where I am. These mature spinsters are sometimes deuced inflammable, and I'm not at all sure that my appearance might not inspire her with a hopeless attachment. [*As he speaks he places chair before mirror, slowly mounts it, and admires himself.*] Therefore, Jack, keep your fascinations in the background! [MISS MARTON also *mounts her chair and looks over screen; on seeing how he is occupied, she goes into a fit of silent laughter, and bobs down, but again peeps cautiously.*] Nature has been gracious to you, my boy. Your face is good, your figure unexceptionable. I don't mind imparting these sentiments to you, Jack, because you're not the

sort of man to be led away by conceit. You know well that conceit makes a man look a fool; besides, you are endowed with a certain innate modesty——

MISS M. [*unable to restrain her laughter*]. Ha! ha!

CAPT. S. [*wheeling abruptly round on chair*]. What, the deuce——

MISS M. [*endeavoring to stop laughing*]. Oh! I beg your pardon.

CAPT. S. Have you been there long? [*She goes into another fit of laughing.*] I suppose I look rather an idiot?

MISS M. My innate modesty, sir, prevents my answering that question!

CAPT. S. [*aside*]. Oh, confound it! [*Direct.*] Ahem!

MISS M. Ahem!

CAPT. S. [*recovering his composure*]. May I introduce myself? My name is Jones, Mr. Jones.

MISS M. I am delighted to hear it. Mine is Smith, Miss Smith. [*Jumps from chair.*]

CAPT. S. [*descends from chair*]. Then, Miss Smith, will you allow me to speak to you?

MISS M. I cannot carry on a conversation with a person I can not see, Mr. Jones.

CAPT. S. Thank you for the hint. [*Pushes back screen and enters.*]

MISS M. [*in confusion*]. Oh, but I didn't mean——

CAPT. S. Oh, I thought you did. [*Formally.*] Perhaps I had better retire.

MISS M. [*coldly*]. If you wouldn't mind.

CAPT. S. But I should mind very much. You see, it's so cold over there, and so dull. [*Sighs.*]

MISS M. [*sighing*]. It is dull.

CAPT. S. And I was getting so bored with myself. [*Sighs.*]

MISS M. I know what you mean exactly. [*Sighs.*]

CAPT. S. And then I am sick of this horrid old screen. I hate screens.

MISS M. They are sometimes very useful—to look over.

CAPT. S. Aha! You startled me awfully; but come, am I exactly what you expected to see?

MISS M. N-no, not exactly. [*Shows picture* so that only he can see it.*] That's what I thought you would be like.

CAPT. S. [*laughs*]. The resemblance is not very great.

MISS M. Not at present; but you may grow to it! [*Turns picture to audience.*] The youth! what he may become! [*Puts it on table.*] Besides, had I seen you when I drew it, I should have depicted you as Narcissus. [*Crosses* R.]

CAPT. S. And why so, may I ask?

MISS M. You evidently are not well up in mythology. Narcissus was a beautiful youth of unexceptionable figure. Standing one day on a chair—I mean, by a fountain—he saw his own image reflected in the glass—I should say, the water; and, falling in love with it, experienced all the agonies of an unrequited attachment. Take warning by his fate, Mr. Jones, and when next you are brushing your hair, restrain your feelings. [*He turns away pettishly.*]

CAPT. S. Might I remark that a little restraint of the tongue is sometimes advisable?

MISS M. Speech is silver, Mr. Jones.

CAPT. S. And silence is gold, Miss Smith.

MISS M. Yes; therefore I couldn't think of being so extravagant as to use it! There, don't be angry, and I'll tell you how it is I came to be weather-bound here. [*Sits* C. CAPTAIN *takes a chair near her.*] You see, the fact is, there was a young man coming, whom papa had ordered me to marry, so I at once determined to have nothing to do with him.

CAPT. S. Naturally.

MISS M. Therefore, I wrote my father and mother a letter, saying that to avoid meeting my expected suitor I had gone to my godmother. Then, after luncheon, when they had gone out to make a round of calls, I jumped on Maxwelton, and off I went. [*Rises.*]

---

* A chalk outline of a baldheaded, red-nosed old man should be previously prepared.

CAPT. S. [*rises*]. And who is Maxwelton, and what had he done that he should be jumped on?

MISS M. Maxwelton is my donkey. You've heard the song "Maxwelton's braes are bonnie," I suppose? [*Sings a snatch from "Annie Laurie."*]—and my Maxwelton has the bonniest bray you have ever heard. [*Crosses* R. C.]

CAPT. S. [*laughing*]. Oh, I see now! But fancy you being engaged to be married!

MISS M. And why not, pray? I'm not absolutely repulsive that I know of——

CAPT. S. You are perfectly charming; only—you are so young, you know——

MISS M. That's not my fault; and, anyway, I'll outgrow it. But, please, understand, Mr. Jones, that I'm not quite a baby. I made my formal début at a ball last spring.

CAPT. S. Did you get lots of partners? [*They resume seats.*]

MISS M. Yes, I never missed a dance.

CAPT. S. I wish I had been there!

MISS M. So do I.

CAPT. S. Really! Why?

MISS M. [*hesitatingly*]. You look—as if you could dance well; besides, I don't feel shy with you; and, though perhaps you wouldn't think it, I am awfully shy with people I don't like.

CAPT. S. Then do you like me?

MISS M. [*bashfully.*] I—I suppose so.

CAPT. S. I'm awfully glad, and I wish more than ever that I had been at this ball. [*Pauses.*] I say, Miss Smith, was *he* at this dance?

MISS M. No; I've never seen *him*, and the more I don't see him, the more I dislike him.

CAPT. S. Just what I feel about the young lady whom my father wants me to marry.

MISS M. What! Are you engaged to be married to a girl you have never seen? [*He nods.*] What a pity we can not marry your tiresome young woman——

CAPT. S. To your niminy piminy noodle of a man. They would be excellently suited to each other.

MISS M. Poor thing! How I should pity her.

CAPT. S. Oh, I don't know; she'd have much the best of the bargain.

MISS M. Not at all; the wife's always the better half.

CAPT. S. Ah, but the man's the nobler animal, and what's quantity compared to quality?

MISS M. I don't care. I maintain she is most to be pitied.

CAPT. S. No, that I can not admit.

MISS M. But I say she is!

CAPT. S. Very well, then, I say she isn't!

MISS M. } [*Together ad lib.*] { Is.
CAPT. S. } { Isn't.

MISS M. [*pettishly*]. Pray how much longer are you going on with that?—like a negative echo.

CAPT. S. Being an echo, I can't stop till you do.

MISS M. Well, I have stopped.

CAPT. S. So have I.

MISS M. [*argumentatively*]. At least you'll admit you were tired first.

CAPT. S. No, no.

MISS M. Do, please.

CAPT. S. Ask me like that, Miss Smith, and there is nothing I would not do to please you!

MISS M. Ah, you don't mean what you say.

CAPT. S. [*with great emphasis*]. I do indeed—only try me!

MISS M. Well, let me see. [*Looks round room.*] Ah! [*Runs to window.*] Suppose you gather me a branch from that holly-tree over the way. [*Points out of window.*]

CAPT. S. A branch from that holly-tree, eh? [*Stands looking out of window in dismay.*]

MISS M. Do you hesitate, Mr. Jones?

CAPT. S. [*hastily*]. Oh, no. I'm going directly. [*Crosses* R. *and stops.*]

MISS M. [*crossing* L.]. Pray, don't trouble yourself! [*Coldly.*] I might have known the value of your protestations!

CAPT. S. I assure you, you mistake me. I consider that wading through a snowdrift to gather holly is the height of enjoyment. In fact, it's quite a little holiday for me. I'll just put my overcoat on and be off. [*Takes down his coat and begins to struggle into it.* MISS MARTON *laughs aside. Puts hands into pockets of overcoat.*] Hello! [*Aside.*] What's this? [*Pulls out four or five ladies' gloves.*] Oh! scalps from the last war-path—representing one, two, three, four, five flirtations, all safely weathered, and now——

MISS M. Are you not gone yet, Captain Jones?

CAPT. S. [*starts and shoves gloves back into his pocket, dropping one as he does so*]. Oh! yes, yes—off now directly. [*Exit.*]

MISS M. [*coming forward*]. Ha, ha, ha, what fun! [*Goes to window.*] Yes, there he goes, plump into the snow; now he's down—up again—how pluckily he goes at it! I'm beginning to be rather sorry I sent him. He must think me a horrid wretch! I'll call him back! No—I don't like to do that! Poor fellow! he'll never forgive me, and I shall never forgive myself for having been so stupid. Stupid! it was most unfeeling! I'll go and order him some hot coffee against his return! [*Crosses* L., *stops short on seeing glove.*] Why, I've dropped one of my gloves. No [*picks it up and examines it*], it isn't mine; I wonder whose it is. Pshaw [*throws it down*], what does it matter to me? and yet I should rather like to know! [*Picks it up again.*] What business had he to go after holly for me, when he had this glove in his possession? Why didn't he tell me? His behavior has been shameful [*whimpers*], and I hope he will scratch himself. [*Crosses* L. C.] As for her, she must have a great fat hand to fill that. [*Holds out the glove by one finger.*] Seven and a half at least, and even then she has burst the buttons off. [*Twists the fingers round viciously.*] I wish her fingers were in it now! I'll burn it. [*Runs to fireplace.*] No, I won't—I'll give it him back, and wish him joy! [CAPT. SELBY *enters; she hides glove in her dress.*]

CAPT. S. [*shivering, covered with snow, and holding a branch of holly in his hand*]. Here it is, Miss Smith.

MISS M. [*very coldly*]. What is "it"?

CAPT. S. Why, the holly. [*Hangs hat up.*]

MISS M. Well, pray, put it down; you don't expect me to touch the nasty, prickly stuff, I suppose?

CAPT. S. [*angrily*]. Have you nothing pleasanter than that to say to me after doing your bidding? [*Puts holly on table.*]

MISS M. Did you scratch yourself?

CAPT. S. A little——

MISS M. I am so sorry. [*Sarcastically.*] By the way, would you like a souvenir of this incident?

CAPT. S. Immensely. [*Aside.*] I'm not likely to forget the incident in a hurry!

MISS M. Then there! [*Holds out the glove to him, stands pouting.*]

CAPT. S. [*examines it, then draws the other gloves out of his pocket and counts them; then bursts out laughing*]. Why, where did you get this?

MISS M. [*rather ashamed*]. Found it on the floor. [*Turns round.*] Why, you've a lot of them!

CAPT. S. Oh, yes; I daresay I have some more in the other pocket. Yes; look here [*produces two or three more*]; but after all, they mean nothing—besides, you know, there is safety in numbers!

MISS M. But if they mean nothing, why do you keep them?

CAPT. S. If they meant something, do you think I should keep them in the pocket of an old ulster?

MISS M. It's not a very romantic place for them, certainly, but, tell me, to whom did they belong?

CAPT. S. How on earth can I tell? Don't ask me to unravel such a tangled skein. Stay, though—this seems familiar to me—[*Holds up a large sized lady's glove.*]

MISS M. That is the one I picked up.

CAPT. S. Ah, yes, I can't be mistaken. Ah! what a host of memories it brings back to me.

MISS M. [*coldly*]. Pleasant, I presume.

CAPT. S. Quite the reverse. This, my dear Miss Smith, belonged to a great-aunt of mine.

MISS M. She must have been a very great aunt to take such a large glove.

CAPT. S. At one time she thought of making me her heir, but I tried the old lady a little too high, by smoking in her best bedroom, and setting my terrier onto her cats, and when the said terrier chewed up her Sunday bonnet, and the mate of this glove, she changed her mind and her will at the same time, and sent me this [*holding up glove*], with the intimation that I need expect nothing more from her. As for the ownership of the other gloves, I give you my word, my mind is an absolute blank. [*Takes coat off, and hangs it up.*]

MISS M. [*aside*]. What a goose I have been! [*Aloud.*] I hope you don't think I've been very disagreeable? [*Sits, L. C.*]

CAPT. S. [*crossing, L. C.*]. Disagreeable! If there was no one more disagreeable than you, what a delightful world it would be!

MISS M. [*softly*]. I think it *is* delightful!

CAPT. S. What! In spite of tyrannical parents and an unwelcome lover?

MISS M. [*blankly*]. I had quite forgotten them and him—I was only thinking of—now!

CAPT. S. [*with meaning*]. And "now" is nice, isn't it?

MISS M. [*shyly*]. Jolly!

CAPT. S. I implore you, Miss Smith—[*Half aside.*] Oh, hang it! I can't implore a Miss Smith. [*Aloud.*] What is your Christian name?

MISS M. Margaret. What's yours?

CAPT. S. Well, I was christened John, but my friends and relations always call me—

MISS M. [*clapping her hands*]. I know—Jack! What was it you were going to say just now?

CAPT. S. [*cogitating*]. Let me see! Ah! I remember.

[*Rising.*] I implore you, Miss—Margaret, nay, I conjure you [*solemnly kneeling*]—do not marry this confounded fellow.

MISS M. [*starting up*]. Good gracious! Mr.—Jack—haven't I run away to avoid the creature? But do get up. Suppose the landlady should come. [*Looks round nervously.*]

CAPT. S. Let her come.

MISS M. I implore you—nay [*falling on her knees*], I conjure you, rise!

CAPT. S. Then promise—

MISS M. I promise.

CAPT. S. That you won't marry *him*. [*Jerks thumb over shoulder.*]

MISS M. That I won't marry *him* [*imitates his gesture*] till you marry *her*.

CAPT. S. Which will never be, till you break your promise.

BOTH [*sighing*]. Ah! [*A silence.*]

CAPT. S. A penny for your thoughts!

MISS M. They're not worth it. I'm certain it would be wild extravagance to give even half that sum for Captain Selby.

CAPT. S. [*dropping her hand and starting up*]. Eh? What? Captain Selby! Then you are Miss Margaret Marton, daughter of Geoffroy Marton, of Marton Towers, who, to avoid marrying this Captain Selby, have run away from home.

MISS M. And how—how do you know that?

CAPT. S. Because, Miss Marton, *I* am Captain Selby.

MISS M. [*after a blank silence*]. The niminy piminy noodle! [*Rises.*] It's too bad! Why, I've run away to no purpose! [*Sits, L. C., with back to him.*]

CAPT. S. In vain have I endeavored to avoid that tiresome young person. [*Sits R. C., with back to her.*]

MISS M. [*speaking over her shoulder*]. You will understand, Captain Selby, that my part of our late conversation was addressed solely to Mr. Jones.

CAPT. S. Precisely so, Miss Marton, and I trust also that you will consider my recent observations as intended for the ear of Miss Smith alone.

MISS M. Of course, of course. Aha [*laughing hysterically*], she had a lucky escape!

CAPT. S. He had, you mean.

MISS M. I said "she," and I meant "she," an escape from a nimminy pimminy noodle. [*As* CAPTAIN S. *gives an angry ejaculation.*] Don't lose your temper, Captain Selby, you gave yourself the name!

CAPT. S. [*jumping up and going up to her*]. Miss Marton, I wouldn't marry you now if you were the only woman in the world.

MISS M. If I were the only woman in the world, you wouldn't have the chance. [*Rises.*]

CAPT. S. Indeed!

MISS M. No! Do you suppose if I had all the eligible young men of the habitable globe at my feet I should be likely to think twice about you?

CAPT. S. *If* you had. But you never would have. You're too crusty.

MISS M. Captain Selby, nature has gifted you with a fascinating exterior. This I know, because I heard you say so, and you naturally have the most reliable information on the subject; but, having expected so much on your face and figure, nature was apparently taken with an economical fit, and seems to have furnished your mind on a scale which I can characterize only as cheap!

CAPT. S. I'll stand this no longer!

MISS M. Dear me, I should have thought that with your unexceptionable physique, you could have stood anything!

CAPT. S. This is too much! I will never—

MISS M. Never—

BOTH. Never speak to you again! Bah! [*Each takes one side of screen and runs it down the stage. He takes up newspaper.*]

MISS M. Well, I never want to see him again, and I'm only sorry we ever met! [*Sobs.*] But one comfort is, he won't dare to come near me again [*sobs*], which, of course, makes it all right,

and makes me feel pretty comfortable. [*Sobs.*] In fact, I never felt so happy in all my life! [*Weeps copiously, and sits R. of table.*]

CAPT. S. [*rising, and walking to and fro*]. H'm! that's all over—precious good job, too! I'm uncommonly glad that things have turned out as they have. [*Stumbles over footstool.*] Confound that footstool, it's always in the way! That's just my luck. Whenever I'm feeling particularly cheerful and jolly, I'm sure to—to—fall over a footstool and hurt myself. However, I must not let her hear me grumbling, or she'll think I'm annoyed at our little dispute! I'll sing a jolly tune and that will deceive her. [*Sings.*] "I wish I was in Dixie, I do, I do."

MISS M. [*aside, and laughing through her tears*]. I wish you were, and there to stay.

CAPT. S. [*singing*]. I wish I was! [*Speaks.*] Odd how out of tune I sing to-day! It's this confounded cold weather that gets into your throat, and—[*pokes the fire violently, and knocks his head against mantel*]. Hang the mantelpiece! [*Sits and rubs his head.*]

MISS M. [*aside*]. How he is swearing! At me, I suppose. [*Puts her hand by accident on the holly.*] Oh! the holly which he went to get for me through the snow. Poor fellow! perhaps I've been rather hard on him! [*Rising, and sidling toward the screen as she speaks.*] I'm sure I have! After all, if I hadn't been ordered to marry him, I think, that is, I feel sure, I should have liked him—very much indeed! [*Stands close to edge of screen, and holds holly round into his compartment.*]

CAPT. S. Dear me! I've got the paper upside down! [*Suddenly sees holly.*] The olive-branch, by Jove! Not if I know it! [*Turns his back on it; she rustles the holly.*] And yet [*rises*] I'm not sure I've behaved quite well. She's very pretty, and very nice, really! And I'm sure she's warm-hearted; at least she gave me it pretty hot just now!

[MISS MARTON *rustles the holly again. He gradually approaches the screen; begins to play with the top leaves and berries of the holly, but works gradually down to her hand; their fingers become entangled, and the holly drops.*]

CAPT. S. [*who has worked back the screen with his foot*]. It—it is very cold.

MISS M. [*shyly*]. Yes.

CAPT. S. Will you forgive me, Maggie?

MISS M. Yes, Jack, though you did say I was crusty.

CAPT. S. Did I?

MISS M. Why, you know you did!

CAPT. S. Ah! But I meant crusty like a sweet cake. Good to eat; at least—er—to—[*draws her toward him as if to kiss her*].

MISS M. Oh [*starting back*]! Hark! what's that? Water dripping off the roof. There must be change of weather. [*Runs to window.*]

CAPT. S. [*following her*]. So there is—it's thawing! I'll order a coach and we'll drive over to your father's house and obtain absolution. And promise never to do so any more.

MISS M. [*coquettishly, as she comes down* C.]. But, Jack, *I* enjoyed it.

CAPT. S. [*rapturously*]. You little witch! [*Takes her in his arms as curtain falls.*]

[CURTAIN.]

THE BEE'S MISSION.

MARION SHORT.

He loved each thread of her shining hair,
But oh, to tell her he did not dare,
But sat and sighed with a hopeless stare.
A bee came swimming the sunlit air—
"Buz-buz-buz."

It circled near with a dreamy grace,
As if enthralled by her flower face,
And, trembling, lit for a moment's space
Within the folds of her bodice lace—
"Buz-buz-buz."

"Oh, hasten, hasten to rescue me,
My locks have tangled a vagrant bee!"
The maiden's terror was sad to see
And quick the lover touched ground with knee—
"Buz-buz-buz."

The bee said: "Now, if he knows love's laws-z
He'll tell the secret that gnaws and gnaws-z;
He'll tell it to her because—because-z
'Tis fatal longer to pause and pause-z,
Buz-buz-buz."

The lover searched with a lover's care—
The bee kept sliding from snare to snare,
The swain found vent for his full despair—
"A heart lies bound in these meshes fair!
Buz-buz-buz."

"Whose heart, I pray thee?" the maiden said,
"My own—and better that I were dead."
"Why so, dear heart? I am free to wed."
A kiss! and skyward the gold bee sped—
"Buz-buz-buz!"

A PAIR OF LUNATICS.

W. R. WALKES.

Text and Stage-Business Edited and Revised
By STANLEY SCHELL.

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CHARACTERS: CAPTAIN GEORGE FIELDING.
CLARA MANNERS.

COSTUMES: Evening dress.

PLACE: Small room off assembly room of Dr. Adams's Asylum for Feeble-minded and Insane.

STAGE SETTING: Rug down, couch with pillows R. C.; couch on a slant; small table at C.; pictures on wall; two easy chairs L.; doors at R. and L. 2 E. and back C. Through B. C. door may be seen a bit of hall leading to assembly room.

SCENE: On rise of curtain CAPTAIN FIELDING is seen peering into room through back C. entrance. He looks carefully around room and enters softly, carefully looking behind sofa, chairs, etc.

CAPT. Nobody here! Thank goodness! [*Yawns, stretches arms high.*] I've had about enough of this. [*Yawns again.*] I've spent many depressing evenings in my time, but a ball at a lunatic asylum beats the lot. Just fancy! Two hundred dancers, and almost every one of them mad! [*While talking moves toward couch on which he drops as if he had found a delightfully peaceful spot at last.*] What a gump I was to come! Confound Jack Adams! [*Jumps up and shoves hands well down into pockets.*] It was all his fault. [*Stalks up and down, then stops.*]

Said I'd find it splendid fun to listen to the strange delusions of the patients! [*Sneeringly.*] Fun, indeed! Well,—perhaps I've no sense of humor. [*Sits on couch and fixes pillows more comfortably.*] To me they are just about as funny as a funeral. And they're so depressingly monotonous. They've got but a poor half-dozen or so of delusions between them; and they copy one another's words and business like a lot of understudies. Now, let me see! [*Counts on his fingers.*] I have danced with no less than three Empresses of China, each of whom offered to share with me the throne of the Celestial Empire. Four of my partners informed me that they were Queens of the Air, and implored me to go out on the roof, and fly together to the sunny South. [*Rises and shows manner of flying, then strides to chair off L.*] The only one who seemed to have a line of business all to herself was my last partner, who flew into a terrific rage directly I approached her, because I had, she said, borrowed her nose to go to an evening party and had not returned it. As she showed every intention of regaining possession of her lost property by main force, I thought it best to guard my indispensable organ [*covers nose with hand*], leave her for a while, and seek safety here. [*Sits comfortably on chair off L. and slightly turned away toward L. Heaves a gentle restful sigh.*] How refreshing is this quiet after the glare and noise of the rooms below, and the ceaseless babblings of idiocy. [*Yawns.*] I feel very tired, quite sleepy, in fact—I'll close my eyes for a few minutes—just for—a —few—min. [*Sleeps; slight pause.*]

[*Enter* CLARA MANNERS, *carrying a large bouquet. She is slightly agitated.*]

CLARA. Thank goodness, here's an empty room [*rushes to couch and drops on it as if thoroughly done over*] where I can rest for awhile in peace. Oh, why did Aunt Maria bring me to this ghastly gruesome function! My head's in a perfect whirl! Dr. Adams assured me that all my partners would be harmless. I suppose he meant by that that they wouldn't try to murder me—and, of course, that's some comfort—but their insane ramblings make my very flesh creep, and then their vacant laughter—oh!

[*shudders*] it's horrible—horrible! [*Looks round.*] I wonder where I am! Oh! [*starting up*] perhaps it's a padded room. [*Moves about room punching and tapping wall; hurts hand and puts it to mouth.*] Oh! No, there's nothing padded but the furniture; but suppose it should be where the violent people are kept in chains—and things. I don't think I'll stay. [*Going toward the door.*]

[CAPTAIN F. *snores.* CLARA *stops suddenly and looks around in terror.*]

CLARA. Good gracious! What's that? [CAPTAIN F. *snores more loudly and prolongedly.* CLARA *seems to freeze and shudder.*] Oh! it's a groan; some poor creature in a straight-jacket. Oh! What shall I do?

CAPT. [*gives a big yawn, stretching up his arms*]. Ouh! [CLARA *discovers him and sinks with a half scream and in a half-fainting condition into the other chair.* CAPTAIN F. *wakes up fully.*] Oh, fudge! just beginning to doze, and in such a place. [*Yawns and stretches again.*] Thought I heard talking. [*Rises and looks about him. Discovers* CLARA.] Hullo! followed! I'll lead her a merry chase. [*Acts demented.*] Eh! [*Puts hand to nose in great alarm.*] It's all right. It's another one. [*Starts to take off his coat.*] How do you do? [*Makes a deep salaam.*] Lady Macbeth or Sultana of Zanzibar.

CLARA [*terrified and aside*]. There he is again! He's taken his coat off. Oh, I hope he isn't violent. How his eyes glare! [*Creeps down R.*]

CAPT. [*aside*]. I must address her, I suppose. I'll humor her a bit. [*Aloud.*] I beg your pardon; but are you looking for any one, the Editor of the "Sun," or Hamlet, Prince of Denmark? [*Moves toward her. She moves away, keeping her eyes on him constantly.*]

CLARA [*aside*]. A lunatic, I knew it. I must humor him. [*Aloud and in timid manner.*] Yes, I am engaged to Hamlet for the next dance, have you seen him?

CAPT. [*aside*]. Poor thing! mad as a hatter. [*Aloud.*] Hamlet? Oh, yes, just this moment left him. We have been

sitting for the last six months on the top of the North Pole tossing for chocolate drops and making railway station sandwiches. [*Moves nearer* CLARA, *who tries to move away without his observing her.*]

CLARA. Really!

CAPT. [*sinking voice and looking round; then moving closer to her as if to disclose a great secret*]. Do you know what railway station sandwiches are made of?

CLARA. Oh, no. [*In terror.*] I mean yes, yes! No, I don't, I mean no.

CAPT. Then I'll tell you [*takes her by the wrist and brings her down to footlights*]; but it's a dark and gruesome mystery. They are made of gooseberry cakes, blacking, bull's eyes, and declining rays of the sun. [*Aside.*] I am quite an accomplished lunatic. [*Laughs and goes* L. *dragging her with him.*]

CLARA [*aside*]. That dreadful insane laughter! How shall I get away! [*Aloud.*] Would you mind accompanying me in search of my partner?

CAPT. [*aside*]. Wants to get me down to dance, not if I know it. [*Aloud.*] Pray, excuse me; the fact is—I am expecting a visit from the Queen of Sheba and the janitor of the Astor Flats; they are coming to offer me a tomb in the Hall of Fame. [*Earnestly, kneeling to her.*] Stay with me, and you shall share it. [*Aside.*] I'm getting on splendidly.

CLARA [*aside*]. Oh, dear, oh, dear! what ravings! [*Aloud, positively, but timidly.*] Thank you very much; it's awfully kind of you, but I don't want a tomb, I don't indeed, I'm not dead yet.

CAPT. But it's such a useful thing to have in the house; and if you grow tired of it you can turn it into a hen house, or better still, raffle it. [*Confidentially.*] I know for a positive fact that the messenger at the Day and Night Bank will take fifty chances. [*Goes up* C. *after letting go* CLARA'S *wrist.*]

CLARA You don't say so. [*Aside.*] He doesn't seem so very violent, but how piteous are his wanderings. Such a pleasant-looking fellow, too!

CAPT. [*aside, up a little*]. This is an interesting case, decidedly, for she has not said a word about her own line of business. Perhaps she's got a novelty. I'll find out. [*Aloud.*] But, tell me what is your particular weakness? You don't fly through the air [*imitating action of flying*] or anything of that sort, do you?

CLARA [*smiling*]. Oh, no, I'm not mad—oh, I beg your pardon— [*Aside.*] How stupid of me. [*Aloud.*] I mean I am only here on a visit to Dr. Adams—his guest, you know.

CAPT. [*aside*]. A guest! [*sorrowfully*] poor creature. They all say that.

CLARA [*sweetly*]. So pleased to have met you, but I am afraid I must be going. Good-by [*going toward door, but keeping eyes on* CAPT. F.].

CAPT. Not just yet. [*Stopping her.*] Tell me all about yourself. [*Aside.*] This is the most charming lunatic I have seen this evening.

CLARA [*aside*]. I must pretend to be mad or he'll resent it and become violent; what shall I say? Ah, I know. [*Aloud.*] I am afraid I must be off, my balloon is waiting for me at the attic window, my swan balloon, you know—and Auntie doesn't like the birds to be kept waiting at night.

CAPT. [*aside, in tone of pity*]. Poor creature! But it's distinctly a new idea and a pretty one. [*Aloud.*] Never mind Auntie. Bother the birds. I'll blow you home through my bean-shooter. [*Sits* L.]

CLARA [*timidly*]. Thank you, that's very kind of you, but I couldn't think of troubling you. [*Aside.*] He won't let me go. I must go on humoring him till somebody comes. [*Sits.*]

CAPT. Come, tell me all about it. [*Genially.*] So you drive about in a balloon, eh? That must be ripping. Is it your own, or hired for the evening?

CLARA [*as though inventing with an effort*]. Eh, oh! our own, but it's not a very grand turn out; the old family balloon, you know; and the swans are an awful pair of crocks, quite past work.

CAPT. How sad! And the coachman—is he anything unusual?

CLARA [*with effort*]. The coachman? Oh, yes, he's a copper-colored cokatoo with a cold in the head. [*Aside.*] How awfully natural it is to be mad!

CAPT. [*aside*]. I like this. Humoring a lady-like lunatic is distinctly entertaining.

CLARA [*rises, timidly*]. Can—can I drop you anywhere this evening?

CAPT. No, thanks. I prefer the old-fashioned bean-shooter. So simple!

CLARA. Indeed!

CAPT. Yes, you put yourself in at one end, and blow through the other, and puff!—there you are.

CLARA. How very convenient! [*Aside.*] Oh, he's dreadfully mad, poor thing! I *must* get away. [*Aloud, edging toward the door, in terror.*] Good-by, thank you so much for this nice chat. Such a pleasant evening.

CAPT. [*intercepting her*]. No, no. Pray stop a little longer. I've a lot of things to talk about before you go. [*Aside.*] I am enjoying this.

CLARA. What things?

CAPT. Heaps of 'em. Solar myths, empty sardine tins; lemonade, bottled ale and stout, programs, books of the burlesque; good morning, have you used Pears' soap? and say, oh say, I implore you that you won't be happy till you get it.

CLARA [*aside*]. How awful! [*Aloud.*] But I must go. I must, indeed, Aunt Maria and Dr. Adams will be getting so anxious about me.

CAPT. [*confidentially*]. Don't bother about them; they're all right. [*Mysteriously.*] Aunt Maria has done it at last. Haven't you heard about it?

CLARA [*startled*]. No. I mean yes, yes. No. I mean no.

CAPT. Then I'll tell you. She has laid Dr. Adams three

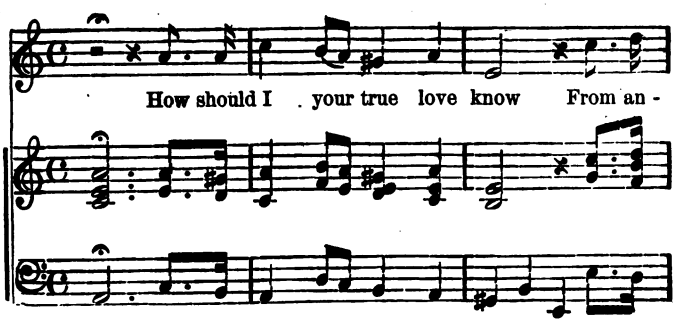
acres to a cow that she will beat him in a go-as-you-please race round the tower of St. Patrick's Cathedral on mowing machines; they are just doing the last lap now, and if you were to interrupt them, do you know what would happen? Consternation, annihilation, and a bad attack of temper. They would clothe you in a costume of custard-colored calico, trimmed with ruffles of fried fish, and marry you to Bernard Shaw. So let me entreat—implore you to remain with me and be safe, snuff-colored and solidified. [*Aside, as he walks away.*] This is awfully good fun; but it's a terrible tax on the imagination.

CLARA [*aside*]. What awful madness! If I could only calm him. [*Suddenly.*] An idea! I've heard that they often soothe these poor creatures with amateur acting. It sounds impossible, but I'll try it. I'll give him as much as I can remember of "Ophelia." [*Goes up a little and proceeds to let down her hair.*]

CAPT. [*aside*]. Hullo! What's she up to now!

CLARA [*places some flowers from her bouquet in her hair, and takes some flowers from the same, and carries them in her hand; speaks in the moonstruck manner of Ophelia*]. Where is the beauteous majesty of Denmark? [*Pause, turn* R. *and* L., *advance, and in sweet voice of melancholy, sing. With clasped hands, move head, limp, in half-circle, backward.*]

[*Sings.*]



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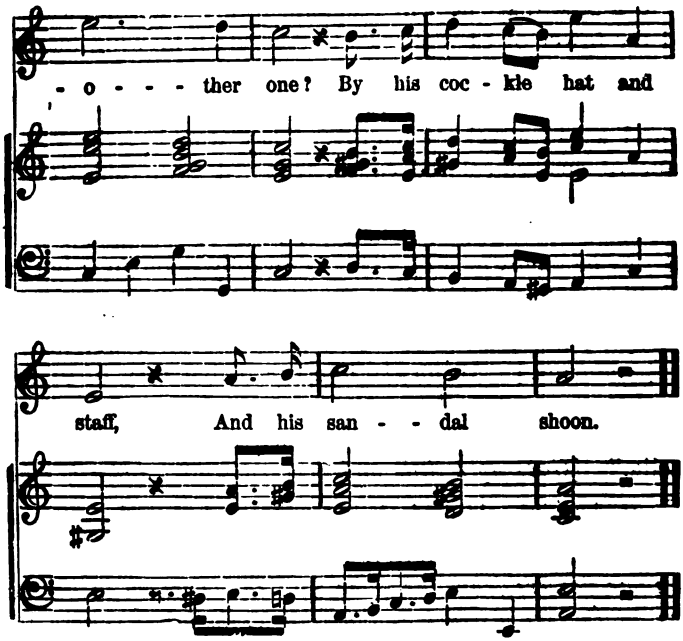


CAPT. [*waves her off*]. Go away. I've nothing for you.

CLARA. They say the owl was a baker's daughter. We know what we are, but know not what we may be.

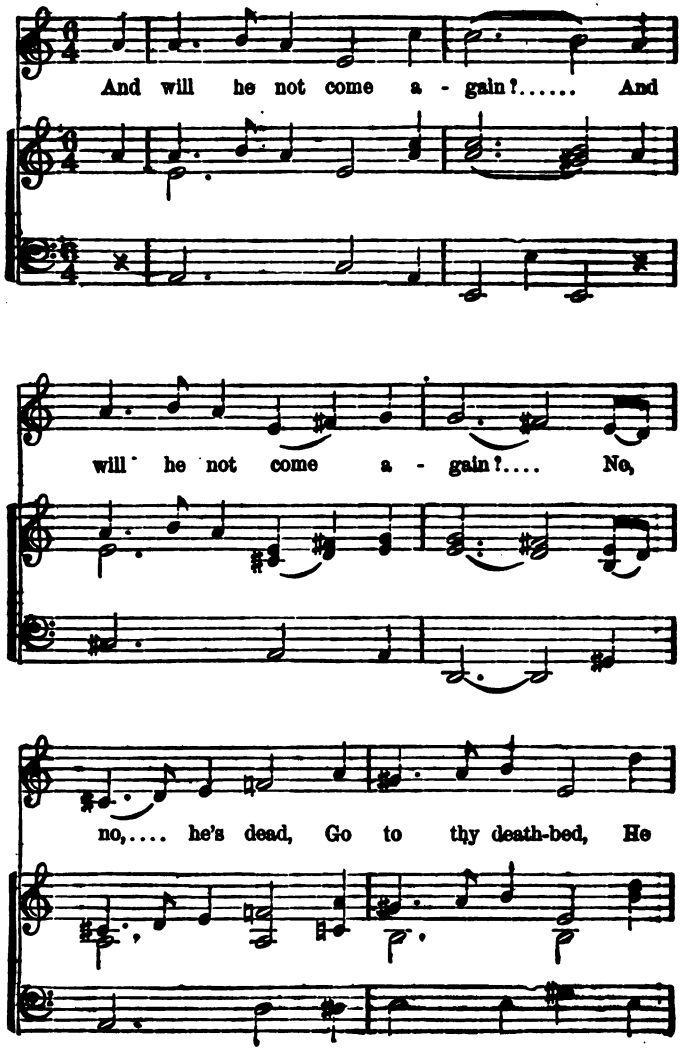
CAPT. [*thrusting out his arms toward her*]. Go away—away.

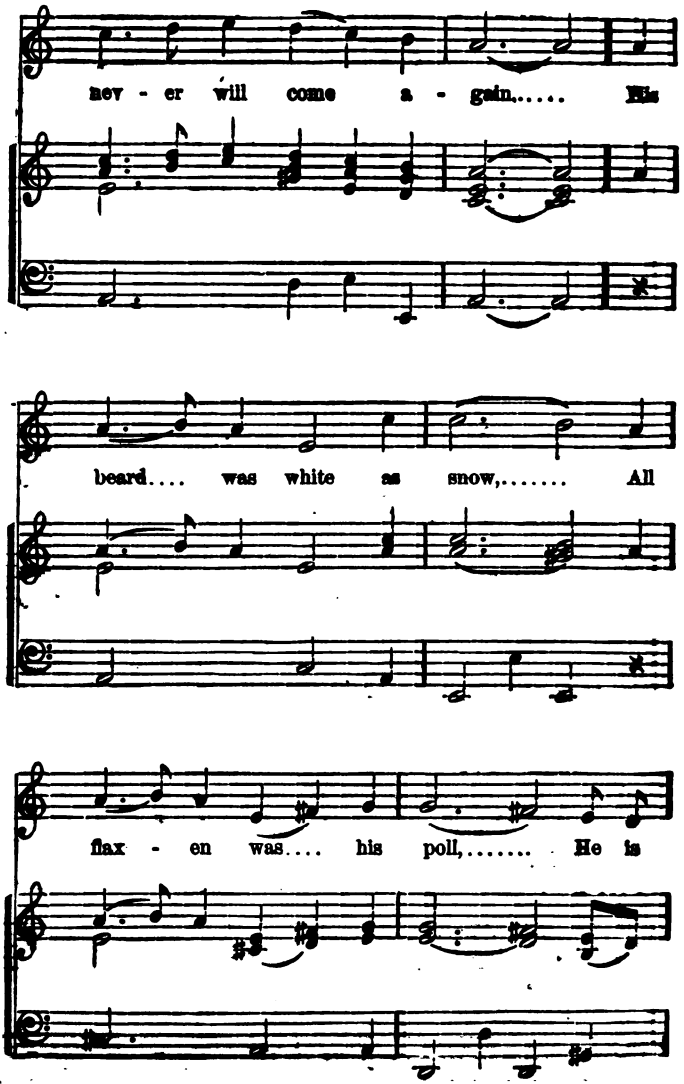
CLARA. There's rosemary; that's for remembrance. [*Offers* CAPT. F. *a flower.*]

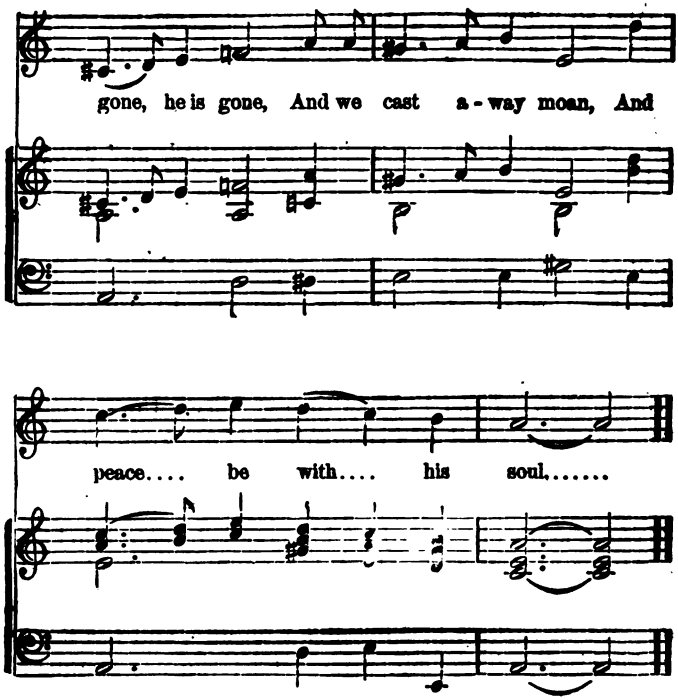
CAPT. Thank you. I don't want any.

CLARA. "O woe is me,
To have seen what I have seen,
See what I see."

[*Sings.*]


And will he not come a - gain?..... And
will he not come a - gain?.... No,
no,.... he's dead, Go to thy death-bed, He


nev - er will come a - gain..... His
beard.... was white as snow,..... All
flax - en was.... his poll,..... He is



[*Throws flowers about stage as she wanders about singing preceding words.*]

CAPT. [*aside and puzzled*]. What *is* her little game? [*Suddenly.*] By Jove! It's play acting. She's doing Shakespeare—Ophelia. Well, I don't know much about him myself, but I'll do my best to keep it up; so here goes. [*Aloud, ranting.*]

To be or not to be: Alas, poor Yorick!
Whether 'twere better in this world to call
A horse, a horse, my kingdom for a horse!
Or take a cab, or else a Fifth Avenue 'bus.
So get thee to a nunnery, and when thou'rt there
Off with his head, and tell him straight from me
My name is Lallal on the Grampian Hills
My father feeds his flock on threes of Scotch

And so whene'er they take their walks abroad
There's something rotten in the state of Denmark.
And so, farewell!
No. No. I will not say "farewell," but "*au revoir.*"

[CLARA *during the foregoing has quailed, and sunk into a chair.*]

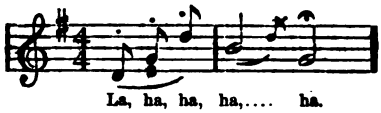
CAPT. [*aside*]. I'm used up. That's all I can remember, but it has done the trick, shut her up completely. [*Smiles complacently.*]

CLARA [*aside*]. How he raved. His Shakespeare is all mixed. I must do something more. I'll try again. [*Rises and glides toward* CAPT. F.; *at same time spreads out train and looks admiringly at it. Aloud.*] I'm Princess Alice. I'm going to have company to-night—real live company! [*Laughs heartily.*] And I'm going to be some company myself. Only think of it—to have company and to be company. And I'm not nervous a bit. [*Walks across stage admiring train.*] Old enough to entertain! Entertain! Ha-ha-ha! Entertain! A big word for a beginner. But I must practise before Johnny comes. [*Meditates, then walks about in stately fashion.*] Now, that's dignity, and I'm the Queen of England! Good evening, Mr.— Oh! you are Hamlet! I'm going to capture you to-night—soul and body. Sit there. I'll sit here. Don't look stern. Now, say you love me—me, your queen.

CAPT. [*aside*]. I'll humor her, but my oh! if some one would only come. [*Aloud.*] My queen [*approaches her, but she waves him back. He falls on knees at table*]; I adore you. I—

CLARA. [*waving hands toward him*]. Go back! Take this with you. [*Throws kiss from finger-tips.*] Didn't catch it, did you? Try again. [*Throws harder.*] The King of Bombay always catches my kisses. Look out, now; here comes one right at your pate. [*Throws kiss.*] Ha, ha! and you muffed it! [*Jumps up suddenly and sings:*]

"How should I your true love know."
[*Stops and listens.*]
"That's Jerry calling me over the river;
I cannot help answering"—



That says we shall row to-night. [*Starts toward B. C. entrance.* CAPT. F. *stops her.*]

CAPT. [*aside*]. She must be mad after all. It's my turn. I'll try something, and I'll win out.

CLARA [*aside, in utter despair*]. It's a failure. He's caught on. Oh! will no one come! [*Thinks a second.*] I know now. Dr. Adams said the other day that with these poor people the commanding power of the human eye was most wonderful. I'll try it. It's my last chance. [*Turns toward him, folds arms, and gazes at him steadily*].

CAPT. [*aside*]. Hullo! a new development. I believe she fancies she's a wax-work and will want me to wind her up. [*Aloud.*] I say, you know, this isn't the "Chamber of Horrors."

[CLARA *advances toward him slowly and melodramatically, her features contorted into an expression of anger and malignity.* CAPT. F. *retreats before her in alarm. They go entirely around room several times.*]

CAPT. [*aside*]. Gee whiz! She's getting violent. This is too much of a good thing! There's murder in her eye. She's stark, staring, raving mad. [*Sinks on floor at her feet.*] Take my life, but spare, oh, spare my child!

CLARA [*aside*]. How lovely! he's quite subdued, but I must keep it up. [*Continues to gaze at him as before.*]

CAPT. [*aside*]. What on earth is to be done. I wonder if I could hypnotize her? I don't know how to do it, but I'll try. [*Rises and advances toward her, a stern expression on face, and makes passes with hands.*]

CLARA [*aside*]. Oh, dear! the effect has gone off and now he is becoming infuriated. Oh, why did I do it! [*Turns away.*]

[CAPT. F. *follows her and makes passes in every position in which he finds himself.*]

CLARA [*faintly, swaying to and fro*]. Oh! oh! I'm going! [*Falls.*]

CAPT. [*catches her, business of passing her from one arm to the other, and finally deposits her in chair*]. She's gone right off. Then [*complacently*] by Jove! I'm a genuine hypnotist and I never knew it. [*Suddenly and alarmed.*] But, how am I going to bring her round again? I'll be hanged if I know. Oh, confound it, this is serious. [*Shakes her by her arm.*] Here, I say, gentle stranger. Your Majesty, fair Ophelia, wake up! [*Business of bringing her round—slaps her hand—and so on.*]

CLARA [*opens her eyes*]. Where am I?

CAPT. [*aside, joyfully*]. Ah! she has said, "Where am I?" then all is well.

CLARA [*rises and looks around*]. Oh! alone, alone with him still! Oh! [*In an agony.*] What shall I do? What shall I do? [*Rushes to the other side of the room, falls into chair and bursts into tears; in taking out handkerchief a letter falls.*]

CAPT. [*aside, alarmed*]. Confound it; she's getting hysterical. This won't do. [*Aloud.*] I say, your Majesty, don't cry. You're not well. Let me call Dr. Adams.

CLARA [*eagerly, brightening*]. Will you, will you?

CAPT. Certainly. [*Going, catches sight of letter.*] But what's this? [*Reads address.*] "Miss Clara Manners, Halbury House." [*Aside.*] That's Jack's favorite sister he's always talking about. How strange! [*Aloud, pointing to letter.*] Then she must be at the ball to-night.

CLARA. Who?

CAPT. Miss Manners.

CLARA. She is. I am Clara Manners.

CAPT. You! [*Aside, laughs.*] Oh, that's awfully good. [*Aloud, soothingly.*] No, no, you're the Sultana of Zanzibar. I recognized you at once by your regal bearing; and I am your most devoted subject, General Booth, the oldest and dearest friend of William the Conqueror [*kneels*], although the people outside [*confidentially*] who are all mad, you know, call me Captain George Fielding of the 45th Lancers.

CLARA [*aside*]. 45th! Captain Fielding! That's Jack's great friend. What a strange fancy! [*Aloud.*] But I assure you my name *is* Clara Manners.

CAPT. Eh? [*Aside.*] Now I look at her, she's uncommonly like Jack.

CLARA [*aside*]. His face bears a wonderful resemblance to Mr. Fielding's portrait in Jack's album. [*They look at each other for a few seconds, and then turn away.*]

CAPT. But surely Miss Manners is not—[*touching his head*].

CLARA. Certainly Captain Fielding isn't—[*they again stare for a second into each other's faces*].

CAPT. [*aside*]. She doesn't look so very mad, after all.

CLARA [*aside*]. I believe he's perfectly sane.

CAPT. I say, now, between ourselves, you don't really propose to go home in a balloon, do you?

CLARA [*laughing*]. Oh dear, no; and you—you are not a *very* dear friend of William the Conqueror, I suppose?

CAPT. [*laughing*]. Oh no, he's dead; my friend is Jack Manners.

[*Puts on coat quickly.*]

CLARA. My brother. [*They shake hands.*]

CAPT. What a lucky chance! I am so awfully glad to make your acquaintance. And you—

CLARA [*rather coyly*]. I am always pleased to meet any friend of Jack's [*with more effusion*], especially a dear friend. [*They shake hands again with much effusion.*]

CAPT. But what lunatics we've been.

CLARA. Yes, hopelessly insane!

CAPT. But as we're quite harmless, suppose we go down stairs to supper, and look for your partner, Hamlet.

CLARA. Yes, and when we've found him, we'll ask him to write an epitaph for your tomb in the Hall of Fame. [*Both laugh.*]

CURTAIN.

THE TATTERED BATTLE-FLAG.

MARION SHORT.

[On Eve of Spanish-American War.]

Bring out that tattered battle-flag, old soldier,
To greet the light once more,
Though sight of it recalls dread scenes of carnage,
The cannon's flash and roar,
The cloud of smoke that lifted after battle,
The faces white and still,
The solemn roll call to the solemn silence,
The watch-fires on the hill.

Bring out that tattered battle-flag, old soldier,
Those stains and rents will tell
To eager eyes that never looked on warfare
The truth some know so well:
That wounds and woe are oft the all of glory.
Those rags you staunchly guard
Went forth a flaunting, flaming silken banner,
Returned thus torn and marred.

Bring out that tattered battle-flag, old soldier,
To us as well as you
It whispers from its folds of our dead heroes,
Whene'er it meets the view,
Of hands that bore the colors unrelaxing
Till death had loosed their hold;
Of failing breaths entreating one last vision
Of stars and stripes unrolled.

Bring out that tattered battle-flag, old soldier,
For, though foretasting pain,
The youthful heart shall feel a love uprising,
Which none can e'er explain,—
The love that even now, O gray-haired soldier,
Invites you to the fray,
That bravely seeks to add to Freedom's heaven
Another star to-day.

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